

10. Sept. 1771.

S E R M O N S
AND
D I S C O U R S E S
ON SEVERAL
S U B J E C T S
AND
O C C A S I O N S

BY
RICHARD RICHMOND, LL.D.

Chaplain to His Grace *K*
THE DUKE OF ATHOLL,
And Vicar of Walton,
LANCASHIRE.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXIV.

STERMOMS
AND
DISCOURSES
ON SEVERAL
SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS

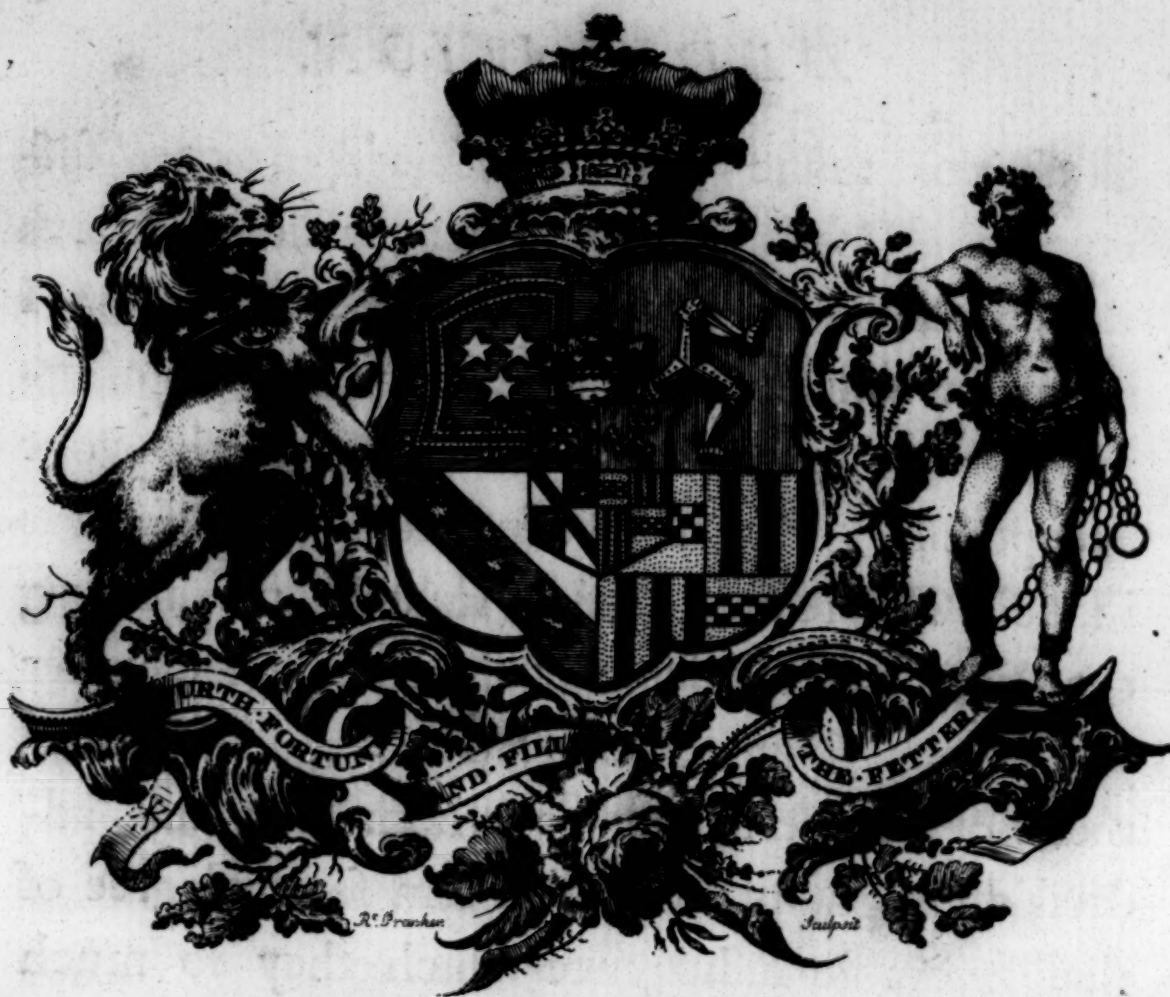


RICHARD D. D.

CLERK & H. C. M.
OF THE DUKES OF ATHOL
AND THE DUKES OF
LANCASHIRE

LONDON

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M.DCCCXXXV.



TO HER GRACE,
The Duchess of Atboll,
Marchioness of Tullibardine &c. &c.
 LADY of MAN and THE ISLES,
and Baroness Strange.

May it please your Grace

TO accept my humblest and most respect-
 full thanks, for the honor done me by
 your condescending permission to prefix your
 A illustrious

illustrious name to the following mean discourses. Conscious as I am of their various imperfections, I cannot but be sensible that I lye open to the charge of presumption in offering to your Grace what is so little worthy your acceptance. But this very consciousness was indeed *one* reason which induc'd me to beg the liberty of sheltering these sermons under your protection; In hope that the dignity and merit of the personage to whom they are address'd, might procure for them some degree of that favorable indulgence which they so much need.

But whatever other faults *may* (as many I fear *will*) be found in them, I hope I may venture to assure your Grace that no sentiments will be met with in any of them, contrary to reason and truth; to virtue and christianity. Ill indeed wou'd it become a preacher of the gospel *knowingly*, to *entertain*, and still worse to *publish* any thing contradictory to these great guides and rules of life and manners; and most of all unbecoming and unpardonable wou'd it be to *address such a sentiment*, to one whose whole

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whole conduct and behaviour is govern'd by the strictest conformity to them ALL.

And that your Grace's deportment is uniformly influenc'd by the dictates of these unerring counsellors, is unknown to those only who are entire strangers both to your person and character. Though I have not had the honor of myself enjoying the opportunities of remarking your eminent and amiable qualities, I have receiv'd my accounts of them from those who have been happy in observing them from your earliest years to the present : With whom I am connected by kindred, and still more nearly by friendship ; whom I know to be by no means deficient in sagacity ; and of whose veracity I have the highest Opinion. And how often have I heard them dwell with delight on your numerous excellencies and perfections ! How often have they prais'd that attention to every even the minutest duty, which is so commendable in *any* station ; so truly admirable in *the highest* ! Sometimes exspatiating on the virtues of your blooming years ; admiring that early piety, that exemplary filial duty, and un-

affected modesty which adorn'd your virgin state ; Thence going on to celebrate the conjugal affection, the Union of hearts as well as hands, of which your Grace and your most noble Lord are such remarkable examples : which each deserves from by each returning it to the other.

How still wou'd they protract the pleasing tale, by pointing out the budding beauties and dawning virtues of your lovely and hopefull off-spring ! who promise so happily to recompence that early diligence, and watchfull assiduity with which you attend the openings of the infant mind ; give the tender twig it's right inclination ; and (assisted by the best of Husbands and Fathers) train up the *youth* to walk in those paths, which lead to, and will ensure honor and happiness to the *man*.

Delightfull task ! How much pleasanter sure, as well as worthier employment of time, than to squander it in the pursuit of every fashionable folly, every idle art of dissipation, to which so many (too many alas !) of far inferior rank devote their hours ! Roaming *abroad* in a vain search

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search after that satisfaction, which your Grace by the happiest experience knows is only to be found *at home*.

Nor is your attention and kindness confin'd to your own relatives alone. True goodness though in humanity it cannot be absolutely perfect, is yet uniform and of a piece : And such is your Grace's ; extending to *all* who have the happiness to be near and about you ; behaving to *all* with an humility rarely to be found in persons of much lower stations ; making your dependents friends by a condescension and affability peculiar to yourself ; and giving your commands with that sweet gentleness which renders obedience a pleasure ; and takes off not only the severity, but even the sense of servitude : Observing (in a word) that *truly golden* rule which contains the sum and substance of all social virtue ; and treating others with all the tenderness, with which if in their situations you cou'd desire to be treated yourself.

And to all this mildness and sweetness you have added another excellence, rarely to be found united with the former in so eminent a degree.

DEDICATION.

degree. That noble frankness (I mean) and openness of disposition ; that genuine sincerity and true greatness of soul, which equally abhors the affectation of a friendship which it does not feel ; and disdains the concealment of a displeasure, which it has just cause to entertain.

It is impossible in reflecting on this part (and indeed on *many parts*) of your Grace's character, to avoid observing how much it resembles that of the *Great and Good* Countess of DERBY ; the ever famous CHARLOTTE who has so long been the pride and boast of our county ; who so justly merited the admiration of all Britain ; whose piety and virtue, loyalty and courage ennobled her still more than her high descent ; though that was from the first houses in Europe : In whose veins flow'd the blood of * TREMOVILLE ! of NASSAU !!

Her high qualities together with her high blood descended to that amiable daughter, that
accomplish'd

* Clarendon's hist. Reb. British Peerage, Fol. Vol. III.

DEDICATION.

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accomplish'd *Lady*, who joyn'd to the honors of her own family those of the noble house of **ATHOLL** : And that the virtues as well as honors of *both* families are conspicuous in your Grace will be doubted or disputed by *one person* only in the world.

But while that world will approve and confirm what I have here said, blaming only the inadequate and insufficient manner in which I have express'd myself, I have too much cause to apprehend the disapprobation of *that one person* whom I shou'd certainly be most unwilling to offend. For though what is said is less, *much less* than with the most scrupulous adherence to truth, may be said, yet I know it is much more than will be agreeable to that modest reserve, that nice delicacy, which makes you so desirous to decline the praise you so highly deserve. But as the fear of giving pain and disgust to that delicacy deterrs me from enlarging further on so fair and copious a subject, Justice will not permit me to suppress this imperfect delineation of a character which I know my inability to paint in proper colors : Justice to the world *in general* ;
and

DEDICATION.

and may I be pardon'd if I say to the great world *especially*, which wants such examples : and justice to those *in particular*, who have the highest obligations to your most illustrious Father ; and who entertain the profoundest Veneration, mix'd with the warmest affection for your Grace ; for your noble and worthy Lord ; and your most amiable family. They form I well know the most earnest and unceasing wishes for your uninterrupted happiness : And permit me to assure your Grace, that in their supplications to that God whom with such true devotion you serve, to pour down his choicest blessings on you and yours, they will ever with the sincerest cordiality be joyn'd by

Your Grace's

Most Devoted,

Most Obedient, and

Most Humble Servant

Richard Richmond.

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L I S T
O F T H E
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THE CON-

T H E
C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N I.

On hearing the word of God:

L U K E VIII. 18.

Take heed therefore how ye hear. ✓

S E R M O N II.

On acquaintance with God.

J O B XXII. 21.

Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace.

S E R M O N III.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus
practically confider'd.

L U K E XVI. 22.

The rich man also died.

a

S E R M O N

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N IV.

The true and practical fear of God the whole
duty and happiness of man.

ECCLES. XII. 13.

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter;
Fear God and keep his commandments, for this
is the whole duty of man.*

S E R M O N S V, VI.

On the example of our saviour.

JOHN XIII. 15.

I have given you an example.

S E R M O N S VII, VIII.

On the testimony of conscience.

2 COR. I. 12.

Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.

S E R M O N IX.

A Visitation Sermon.

2 COR. VI. 6.

By pureness, by knowlege.

S E R M O N

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N X.

A Charity Sermon.

M A T T. XXV. 40.

*Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done
it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye
have done it unto me.*

S E R M O N XI.

On Christmas-Day.

L U K E II. 14.

*Glory to G O D in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will towards men.*

S E R M O N XII.

A Thanksgiving Sermon.

I S A I A H XLV. 6, 7.

*I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the
light and create darkness; I make peace and
create evil; I the Lord do all these things.*

A S E R-

C O N T E N T S

P R E F A C E

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

A B B R E V I A T I O N S

A C C O U N T O F T H E

A U T H O R ' S

W O R K

A C C O U N T O F T H E

A U T H O R ' S

W O R K

A C C O U N T O F T H E

A U T H O R ' S

W O R K

A C C O U N T O F T H E

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A U T H O R ' S

W O R K

A C C O U N T O F T H E

A U T H O R ' S

W O R K

A C C O U N T O F T H E

A U T H O R ' S

W O R K

On hearing the word of God.

I

A

S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish Church of
Walton,

On Sunday September the 18th, 1757.

LUKE VIII. 18.

TAKE HEED THEREFORE HOW YE HEAR.

THE character given of the sacred writings S E R M.
by one who had a great share in the com- I.
position of them, that they are *profitable for* ^{2 Tim. III.}
doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruc- ^{16, 17.}
tion in righteousness ; in a word, that by them
the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly fur-
nished unto all good works ; lofty and high found-
ing as it may at first sight seem, yet will be
found upon an attentive and impartial examina-
B tion,

S E R M. tion, a reasonable, a just, yea and modest account
 I. of them. Every virtue becoming our rational nature, every duty requir'd by our social and civil connexions, every grace that can adorn and prepare us for immortality is in those inspir'd pages taught by the plainest and most instructive precepts; illustrated by the brightest and most engaging examples; and enforc'd by the strongest and most powerful inducements. No longer left to the glimmering light of unassisted reason, which cou'd but partially and imperfectly trace out the measures of our duty, and was still more defective in motives to engage us to, and helps to assist us in the practice of it, we have all that is requir'd from us in order to our acceptance with God, so planely deliver'd in holy writ, that *he who runs may read*, and the simple understand it. So that was our progress in holiness to be in any degree answerable to our means and opportunities of growing in grace, we might be expected to *shine as lights in the world*, in all things approving ourselves *patterns of good works*. But since this expectation is so sadly contradicted by experience; since amidst the abundance of good
 I feed

seed sown so much *falls by the way side, so* SERM.
much upon the rock, so much among thorns; I.
and so small, so very disproportionate a part Luke VIII.
into that good ground which brings forth 5, &c.
much fruit; Since (I say) our duty and our
practice are so terribly at variance, it may be
of use, and one mean of lessening this diffe-
rence to enquire into the reasons why those
who so frequently hear God's word read and
preach'd shew so little good effect of their
hearing in their lives and conversations.

And as it cannot be denied, it must not be
dissembled, that one cause of this want of im-
provement in the hearers of God's word is
the fault and imperfection of those who teach it.

We preach not as our blessed Master and
his Apostles preach'd; and what is worse
we live not as they liv'd: No wonder then
that our sermons fall so far short of produc-
ing the happy consequences which attended
theirs. The best and wisest of us have much
greater reason to humble ourselves before
God in a sorrowful acknowledgement of our
unworthiness to wait at his altar, than to value

S E R M. or think highly of ourselves on account of any
I. either natural or acquir'd advantages.

But though the preachers of the gospel cannot acquit themselves of some share of the blame of this unfruitfulness in the hearers, yet is it not either wholly or principally to be charg'd to their account. The Apostles
1 Cor. II. 4. who spake with *demonstration of the spirit and of power*, and who liv'd in the strictest conformity to their doctrines, yet had not always equal success in their preachings; Sometimes their word was receiv'd with gladness; on other occasions oppos'd by perverse gain-sayers; and even at the same time, and to the same auditory had very different influence on different persons: *Some* (we read) *believed the things which were spoken* (by St. Paul) *and some believed not*: Even the blessed Jesus himself, the eternal wisdom and word of GOD, who *spake as never man spake*; who *did no sin*, but continually *went about doing good*; even this divine and all accomplish'd preacher frequently fail'd of persuading and converting his hearers. It is therefore evident that the good effects

Acts xxviii.
24.

effects to be expected from the preaching of S E R M.
GOD's word depend much more upon the dispo- I.
sitions of those who hear it, than upon the qualifications of the teachers. Not more different the plenty and goodness of crops, sown one in improv'd and well cultivated, the other in barren and impoverish'd ground, than the different influence of the same preaching upon attentive, humble, and well dispos'd persons, and upon the negligent, the worldly, and profane. And since according to the terms of acceptance declar'd in the gospel you can have no hope of future happiness but upon the condition of your obedience to the will of God; and since your doing his will must in a great degree depend on the manner in which you hear it; I cannot I think more properly begin the discharge of this part of my ministry among you, than by offering to you such rules and directions, as if duly observ'd may I hope enable you so to hear the word of God read and preach'd, that it may bring forth in you the fruit of good living; to the honor
and

S E R M. and praise of his name, and the eternal salvation
 I. of your own souls.

I. And First then, when ye assemble and meet together to hear God's most holy word, take heed that ye hear it with attention. Without this indeed ye may as well not hear it at all. The whistling of the wind, or the murmurs of the stream may as justly be expected to inform your understandings, or influence your wills, as a discourse the best adapted, compos'd, and deliver'd, if it be not heard with attention. The *priest's lips* are indeed to *keep* and to impart *knowledge*; but can they receive it who regard not what he speaks to them? *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*; but this word though *quick and powerful*, and *effectually working in them who attend to and believe it*, is yet no better than a dead *letter*, even the *letter which killeth*, to those who like the deaf adder stop their ears; *who will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.*

To

To come to church without a resolution of S E R M.
I.
attending to what is perform'd there is a
procedure equally impious and absurd: Absurd,
as it is a mere throwing away our time under
a pretence of doing what yet we do not in
reality; and impious, as it is the most direct
affront to the infinite majesty of the Supreme
Being, who will alike condemn those who ab-
sent themselves from his house, and those who
behave negligently and irreverently in it.

And considering also the importance of the
subjects there treated on, we might hope that
they would be listen'd to with respect and re-
gard. Shall the pleader's eloquence, or the Sena-
tor's harangue engage silent attention, and ex-
cite loud applause? And shall the declarations
and injunctions, the promises and threatnings of
the Almighty and Eternal God be overlook'd
as topics beneath our concern? Shall even
the feign'd representations of the dramatic scene
be eagerly pursu'd, and attended with delight?
And shall the *reasonings of righteousness, tempe-
rance, and judgment to come* be deem'd un-
worthy the notice of those to whom they are
address'd?

S E R M. address'd ? Not so were they judged of by
 I. that heathen governor, who paid such regard
 Acts xxiv. 25. to, as to tremble at them. And doubtless
 that heathen will rise up in judgment with
 those Christians, and will condemn them, who
 while God is speaking to them by the mouth
 of his minister suffer their minds wilfully to
 wander, and neglect his admonitions. If there-
 fore you wou'd avoid the guilt and punish-
 ment of despising God's word ; If you desire
 to receive it to your edification and advantage,
 and not to your condemnation, be very careful
 to hear it with attention.

II. A second qualification requisite to your
 hearing the word so, as to profit thereby, is
 an humble and candid disposition : Humble in
 respect of him whose word it is ; and candid
 towards those who are appointed to dispense it.

There are a sort of hearers (though these
 perhaps can be look'd upon only as accidental
 and occasional hearers) who think so highly of
 their own reason, and so meanly of infinite wis-
 dom, that they will admit nothing on the
 authority

authority of the latter, which cannot be de- S E R M.
monstrated by the strength of the former. They I.
are too wise to believe any doctrines which
they cannot wholly comprehend ; and too proud
to obey any precepts all the reasons of which
they do not discern. *Proud and haughty* Prov. xxi. 24.
scorners are they ; and scorners like may *seek* xiv. 6.
wisdom, but are sure never to *find it*.

Far be it from any protestant clergyman
to recommend that blind faith, and impli-
cit obedience which the priests of the church
of Rome require from their people : *To the*
law, and to the testimony, to the written word
of God we willingly appeal as the standard
of our doctrines ; If our preaching be not con-
formable thereto, not only disregard but re-
ject and abhor us. But while we deliver to
you *that form of sound words* which we have
received from our Lord and his Apostles ;
while we inculcate no doctrines, urge no pre-
cepts, but what we can shew to be revel'd
and commanded in the holy scriptures ; then,
tho' some of those doctrines shou'd be above
either your comprehension or ours ; though

C

neither

SERM. neither you nor we shou'd be able to penetrate into all the reasons of some precepts, yet take heed that ye refuse not your assent and obedience; lest ye be found to exalt yourselves against GOD; and to oppose your weak and imperfect reason to him *in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowlege are hid.*

Col. II. 3.

And as ye ought to receive the word of God with all humility, so shou'd ye hear the preachers of it with candor. Not all have equal abilities and talents; opportunities and advantages alike: But all are alike the ministers of God; all equally preachers of the same divine word. And while in their discourses they keep close to that word, how little soever of art and method, of grace and elegance appear either in the composition or delivery, it is your own fault, and will be your misery, if ye receive no spiritual advantage from them. The most ingenious and accomplish'd hearer may if he is as well dispos'd as ingenious, be reminded at least by the meanest preacher of something which he ought to believe and to practise. What though therefore we speak not with *the enticing*

I

words

words of man's wisdom; though rude and undorn'd our phrase, weak and contemptible our speech, yet hear us with favor for the sake of that word we preach: Nor suffer yourselves to despise the ministers of Christ, lest ye incur the guilt of despising him who sent them. S E R M. I. Luke x. 16.

III. A third and most essential qualification for hearing God's word aright is a sincere and honest intention of practising whatsoever we shall learn to be our duty. I call this resolution of doing God's will a most essential qualification for hearing it aright, because without this all other qualifications will be of no use or advantage at all.

Our preaching and your hearing will be equally insignificant and of no effect, unless ye resolve to observe the good instructions ye hear, and carry your pious resolutions into practice. In vain the vernal showers descend; In vain arose the summer's sun; useless all the husbandman's industry and care; if the overspreading of rank and pernicious weeds, or the inroad of wild and savage beasts defete his hope of the promis'd harvest. And to no better purpose do Christ's

SER M. ministers preach his word, with no more advantage will ye attend to it, if after ye have heard it ye suffer it to be chok'd by the most noxious and poisonous weeds, the sinfull cares and pleasures of this life ; or rooted up by those worst and wildest of savages, lawless appetite, and ungovern'd passion.

Matt. VII.
24, &c.

Remember therefore the declaration of our blessed saviour in the conclusion of his divine sermon on the mount : *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house upon a rock : And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not ; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house upon the sand : And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell : And great was the fall of it.*

Great indeed ! and beyond description terrible will be the final fall of all those who heard
and

and *knew their master's will*, and contradict- S E R M. I.
ed it in their lives and actions. Not their
having said *Lord, Lord* ; Not their attendance
on God's worship, and the outward ordinances
of religion will avail them any thing in that
awfull day, when the fate of all mankind
shall be finally determin'd : It will then be
said unto them by their offended Judge ; *I* Ibid. 23.
*never knew you ; Depart from me ye that work
iniquity.*

They who offend through ignorance which
when it is not wilfull and in our power to
remove is pitiable, may hope to escape *with* Luke xii. 47,
few stripes ; But he who knew his Lords will, 48.
*and prepared not himself, neither did according
to his will shall be beaten with many stripes.*
Most just and equitable surely must we acknow-
lege this procedure to be, since we make it
the rule and standard of our own conduct to-
wards one another. The blunders of a ser-
vant, the errors of a child, the imperfections
of a friend ; these are (as they ought to be)
easily overlook'd and forgotten : But what pa-
rent or what master will be satisfied with his
son's

S E R M. son's or his servant's attentively hearing his
 I. commands, if that son or that servant shews his
 disregard of them by an habitual, or frequent
 disobedience? Or what friend is there among
 us who will be long contented with fair promi-
 ses and large professions, if he finds by the only
 sure proof the proof of facts, all his kindness
 undervalued, and his friendship unreturn'd.

Matthew vii.
 2.

With this *measure with which we mete*, (and under
 due restrictions, and proper regulations a just
 and reasonable measure it is) it shall be measur'd
 to us again. *Receive* therefore as hath been be-
 fore urg'd to you, with attention, humility, and
meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save
your souls: But above all take care to be *doers*
of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your
own selves. *Yourselves* indeed; and yourselves
 alone. *God ye cannot deceive*: He will not be
 mocked; but will render to every man according
 Gal. vi. 8. to (not his hearing, but) *his works*. *He that sow-*
eth to the flesh in the course of a worldly and car-
 nal life, *shall of the flesh reap corruption*; and be
 that *soweth to the spirit* in the conscientious dis-
 charge of his Christian duties, *shall of the spirit*
reap life everlasting.

IV. Fourthly

IV. Fourthly and Lastly.

Seeing that all our sufficiency is of God, That 2 Cor. III. 5.
it is he who worketh in us both to will and to do of Phil. II. 13.
his good pleasure, let us to our hearing his word
with attention and humility, add our sincere and
fervent prayers for those assistances of his holy
spirit, without which our hearing will be un-
profitable, and our attention in vain. Though
the brightest genius and happiest improvement of it
shou'd combine to form and complete the preach-
er; *though he cou'd speak with the tongue of men*
and angels; though Paul shou'd plant, and A-
pollos water, yet wou'd no fruits of righteouf-
ness crown their labors with success, unless God
gave the increase.

To him therefore the giver of every good gift
let us address our devout petitions; That he
wou'd so *open our eyes, that we may behold won-*
drous things out of his law; that he wou'd purge
our hearts from all hypocrisy, pride, and self
conceit; from all inordinate desires and immo-
derate cares; and whatsoever may hinder the
growth and increase of the heavenly seed of his
word:

S E R M. word: That we may receive it into honest and
I. good hearts, such as will bring forth much fruit,
to his glory; and our own eternal happiness. Fi-
nally; Let us beseech him to grant his grace to
all pastors and teachers that they may diligently
preach his word; and to the people that they
may obediently follow the same; that all may
receive the crown of everlasting glory, through
the merits and mediation of his only son Jesus
Christ our Lord!

Collect for St.
Peter's day.

On

J O B XXII. 21.

ACQUAINT NOW THYSELF WITH HIM, AND
BE AT PEACE.

TH E advice here given by Eliphaz to his S E R M.
afflicted friend is what we might naturally II.
suppose every reasonable person wou'd without
persuasion be inclin'd to follow. Men are for
the most part easily dispos'd to cultivate such ac-
quaintance as is likely to be beneficial to them;
and that which is here recommended to Job is
the only one from which all may be sure of de-
riving the highest advantages, without a possibi-
lity of sustaining the smallest inconvenience.

Whence can it be then that the lofty and am-
bitious, the admirers of greatness, and followers
of great men, do not aspire after an intimacy
with the Lord of all Lords? in comparifon of
whom the mightiest monarch upon earth, is light-
er and less than the poorest insect; balanc'd with
the earthly prince. And why will not the men
of pleasure be induc'd to commence a friendship
D with

S E R M. with that Being *in whose presence is fullness of joy,*
 II. *and at whose right hand are pleasures for ever-*
 Psalm xvi. 11. *more?* Alas! these seek only fleeting and un-
 satisfying delights; and those pursue honors which
 can scarcely blush and blow, ere they are nipt
 by the frost of disappointment; or canker'd by
 the worm of inward discontent. But if worldly
 grandeur and sensual pleasure lead man (as they
 too generally do) to forget God, let none hence-
 forth repine at being introduc'd into a school
 where he will again be taught to *remember his*
Creator. This is the school of affliction, in
 which we may learn wiser lessons, and more use-
 full instructions than were ever deliver'd in those
 of the philosophers. *Here* we shall both view
 ourselves, and behold other objects in a just and
 proper light; *Here* stripping off those disguises
 which folly and vanity, self delusion, and the
 customs of the world had thrown over our dar-
 ken'd minds, we shall discover their nakedness,
 their weakness and insufficiency; And from hence
 shall learn to seek for and implore the assistance
 of the Almighty. And *here* also in this school
 of affliction and distress, whether the effects of

an immediate dispensation of providence, or the S E R M.
natural consequences of our own sins and follies, II.
we shall find out the true worth and value both
of those acquaintances and friendships which we
have hitherto so assiduously cultivated; and of
that which we perhaps heretofore too much neg-
lected. Possibly we may see reason more coolly
and with greater indifference to regard some at
least among the former; But certainly we shall see
the highest reason with constancy and fervency to
embrace the latter; And by acquainting our-
selves with God to regain the peace we have lost.

The subjects of consideration naturally arising
from the text are

I. The proper methodsof acquainting our own
selves with God: and

II. The happy consequences of that acquaint-
tance; that we shall through it be at peace.

I. The *first* step towards obtaining an acquaint-
tance with God is to acquire a competent know-
ledge of his nature, his attributes, and his will.
No one I presume will imagine that I mean to re-
commend an enquiry into the metaphysical essence
of the Supreme Being. Can the finite compre-

S E R M. hend infinity? Or can eternity be measured by
II. time? *Can we by searching find out God? Such*

knowlege as it is too wonderfull for us, and what we cannot attain unto, to endeavour after wou'd be equally presumptuous and absurd. But a competent knowlege of the moral nature of the Deity is both possible and necessary to

Romans i. 20. *US. The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. In these things that are made, in the structure of the world, in the vegetable and animal creation, and above all in the formation of Man, there appear plain marks of infinite wisdom, and visible traces of Almighty power. The rain and fruitfull seasons*

Psalms lxxv. 13. *which visit and enrich the earth, the pastures clothed with flocks, and the valleys cover'd over with corn, shew the goodness and bounty of*

Acts xiv. 17. *that Being who thus filleth our hearts with food and gladness. And the natural tendency and general efficacy of virtue to promote happiness, and of vice to produce misery, are sufficient indications that the Supreme Lord of all is a favorer of righteousness and an enemy to evil: And afford*

a strong

a strong presumption that he will hereafter rec- S E R M.
tify whatever seems unequal in his distributions II.
here. Thus much the light of nature shews to
be probable; This and much more the revela-
tion of our saviour renders certain. We need
now seek no farther for a knowlege of the divine
nature so far as it concerns us to be acquainted
with it. God's infinite wisdom and almighty
power, his perfect purity and holyness; his jus-
tice and faithfullness; his goodness and mercy;
his general and particular providence; his de-
termin'd resolution finally to punish incorrigible
wickedness, and to reward sincere though im-
perfect obedience; — All these are in the
holy scriptures set forth with such perspicuity
and plainness, that the most moderate under-
standing which will apply itself to this fountain
of instruction may gain all requisite intelligence
concerning his divine nature and attributes.

And his will and all that he requires from us
is there laid down with equall clearness: So that
we can be no longer in doubt about the method
of rendring ourselves acceptable to our creator
and Judge. But what above all must contribute
to

S E R M. to our ease and comfort; in this revelation are
 II. declar'd and ascertain'd the means by which those who have been wilfull sinners may be secure of finding mercy from their offended God. His goodness as it might be collected from the arguments of natural reason alone, wou'd afford some hope that repentance and amendment wou'd prove such means: But as unbiass'd reason wou'd also suggest, that justice and the honor of the divine law requir'd some punishment for wilfull transgressions, there would remain very uneasy doubts how far the imperfect obedience of the latter part of a man's life wou'd atone for the wickedness and rebellion of the former. But the reconciliation of justice with mercy, of sinfull man to a pure and holy God is in the new testament fully revel'd. An atonement and satisfaction of infinite value is declar'd
 1 Tim. II. 6. to have been paid and accepted as *a ransom for all*; Plenary pardon of all past offences, the assistance of God's holy spirit, and everlasting happiness in an heavenly kingdom are offer'd on easy and reasonable terms. These are the *glad tidings* preach'd in the gospel: And how can we
 be

be sufficiently thankfull for the peace and comfort they restore to our hearts? Suspense is one of the most uneasy states which the human mind can endure; When the matter concerning which we are in doubt is of great consequence and touches us nearly, the anxiety and pain of it is proportionably increas'd; But to a guilty conscience apprehensive of the consequences of its own crimes, it is intolerable. From this fearful frozen guest an acquaintance with God's nature and attributes, his will and word will effectually deliver us: As it informs us in what hands we are plac'd; what kind of a master we have to deal with; what behaviour he expects from us; and what treatment we shall receive from him: And convinces us that if we sincerely desire and heartily endeavour to serve and please him, we cannot fail of success, and unspeakable rewards. Thus by acquainting ourselves with God, may we be at peace.

S E R M.
I I.

II. But *Secondly*; we must acquaint ourselves with him by a sincere repentance of our past transgressions.

This

S E R M. This is pointed out in the verses immediately
 II. following the text : *Receive I pray thee the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart ; if thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.*

And this is indeed a necessary consequence of the former step towards an acquaintance with God. For the result of our enquiries into his nature and word will be, that he is a Being of the most perfect purity and holiness ; and of course that all unreasonable and vicious conduct is most offensive and odious in his sight. This truth in some degree discoverable by the light of reason is confirm'd with certainty by the gospel of Christ ; who hath *revel'd the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ;* hath assur'd us of his abhorrence of all iniquity ; and of his unalterable resolution to exclude those who obstinately persist in it from the happiness of his kingdom. From this knowlege of God we shall clearly discern that without a sincere repentance and effectual reformation of whatever is displeasing to him, we have no reason to be at peace : Far from it, while we continue impenitent

tent, we have the greatest reason to be over-whelmed with terror and dismay. But then we as plainly perceive on the other hand, the means to regain this peace of mind ; by forsaking those vices which have wounded and disturb'd it. God's goodness and mercy are as clearly deducible from reason, and as fully ascertain'd by revelation, as his holiness and justice ; And the latter being satisfied by that expiation which our blessed Redeemer made upon the cross, no one needs to despair of obtaining the former, who will seriously set himself to repent and amend. That the sins of all such tho' red *as scarlet shall* Isaiah I. 18. *be* render'd *white as snow*, we are assur'd by him who alone hath power to pardon or punish them : And who hath promis'd so to put away the sins of the true penitent, as to *remember them no* Hebrews X. 17. *more.*

And this is surely a ground of peace the highest that can be afforded to frail and faulty man ; who may be sure of escaping the worst consequences of his past transgressions by turning to his God with true repentance. Only let him take heed that his repentance be indeed such as

E

be

S E R M. *he who searcheth the heart* will accept. To ren-

II. der it such it must be pure ; universal ; and persevering. Pure in respect of the motives from which it springs ; which though in it's first beginnings of a less noble nature, must yet in it's progress and proficiency be refin'd and exalted into a sincere love of God ; and an hearty detestation of sin, as being offensive to him, as well as prejudicial to ourselves : And accompanied with all those pious dispositions enumerated by St. Paul as the genuine effects of a *godly sorrow working repentance to Salvation*.

2 Cor. VII.
10, 11.

And this repentance must also be universal ; extending to all the particulars of our duty and God's commands. Men may cease from the commission of *some* sins, because the temptations to them have ceas'd ; or out of a sense of the inconveniencies which their healths, their fortunes, or their characters suffer from them. But obedience to be acceptable must be as comprehensive as the law which enjoyns it : *God* will not divide with *mammon* ; nor can *Christ* have concord with *Belial* : *Whosoever* offends in one *point* (that is knowingly and wilfully allows himself

self in the habit of any one sin) *is guilty of all* ; S E R M. II.
 as he affronts that authority which hath prohibited all. But he who makes the word of God the director and rule of his repentance, will certainly avoid the *custom of any*, the *act of any gross sin*. Such have only to persevere to the end to secure their peace or happiness. For true repentance must be constant and persevering.

It is justly and forcibly argued by the wise son of Sirach ; *He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again what availeth his washing ? So is it with a man that fasteth for his sins, and goeth again and doeth the same ; who will hear his prayer ? Or what doth his humbling profit him ?* That circle of sinning and repenting, yet sinning again, in which so many pass their whole lives, and in which they delude themselves with groundless hopes, is by no means a state of safety and salvation. It cannot indeed be expected that an habitual sinner shou'd by one effort *be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God* ; Time and great resolution are requisite to overcome the force of custom ; But these with

Ecclesiasticus
 XXXIV.
 25, 26.

S E R M. that divine assistance which is never denied to the
II. devout and constant suppliant will at length effect the desir'd change. Faults of inadvertency and surprize may be consistent with a growth in grace, and the progress of reformation ; But then only can we have a well grounded peace in ourselves and with our God, when our repentance has brought us into such habits of virtue that we no more return wilfully to our old sins.

And when it has arriv'd at this pitch we have the justest cause to be at peace ; We may *then* live with comfort, and dye with courage. In full expectation of a future state of perfect and never ending happiness, we cannot be too greatly disturb'd at any events of this mortal life. Even those evils which may be the consequences of our former sins and follies, though they must always suggest uneasy reflections, yet ought not in such a situation to affect us too deeply. For they are at worst but transient and temporary evils : Every day that we live brings them nearer to their final period : And while the great, the rich, and the happy of this world dread the approach of the inevitable hour, as the end of all their enjoyments ;

ments ; the sincere penitent welcomes and hails S E R M.
it as his deliverer, his comforter, and friend. He II.
lays him down in peace, sure of rising again to
glory ; and of renewing the acquaintance here
happily begun with his creator, in the enjoy-
ment of his blisfull presence to everlasting ages.

III. And *lastly*. When by a due knowlege
of God's nature, and a repentance which has
render'd us conformable to his will we have *ac-*
quir'd an acquaintance with him, we must be
carefull to *preserve* and *improve* it by frequent
and fervent prayer and devotion. This also is
suggested by Eliphaz in the verses following the
text. For *then* says he to Job, (that is upon thy
putting away iniquity and returning to God) *shalt*
thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt
lift up thy face unto God : thou shalt make thy
prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee. Prayer
and religious meditation is the proper food of
our souls. It maintains and keeps up that com-
munion with God, without which whatsoever is
good in them will quickly languish and decay ;
And they can no more be preserv'd in health
and

S E R M. and soundness without a regular and devout performance of it, than the body can be supported in strength and vigor without due supplies of meat and drink. But O ! *the peace which passeth understanding*, the comfort to sensual and worldly hearts unknown, which arises from this holy intercourse between an intellectual, spiritual being, and the author of his existence the fountain of light and life, cannot adequately be describ'd ; and by experience only can be known. In the retir'd recesses of the closet, excluding, and excluded from every human eye, the pious soul may *pour it's complaint before it's God, and shew him of it's trouble* : Certain that *here* it's complaint will not be unregarded ; nor it's trouble unreliev'd. In every distress incident to humanity, amidst all the changes and chances of this mortal life, the truly devout will find ease and comfort from an humble application to the throne of grace. But most in those sorrows which arise from the review of our sins, will the tears of minged grief and joy flow in one united stream. While we weep at the remembrance of our ingratitude to our benefactor, our father and friend ;

friend ; we shall be consol'd by the recollection S E R M.
that even this ingratitude thus bewail'd and re- II.
pent'd will be remember'd no more. And the
contrite heart though it heaves with anguish at
the thought of those sins which pierc'd it's fa-
vour's side, will yet feel itself light'ned of the
furcharging load, by the chearing reflection that
the blood which flow'd plenteous thence was not
shed for it in *vain*.

When (then) *we are in heaviness* whether occa-
sion'd by temporal or spiritual evils, *let us think*
upon God : Let *us acquaint ourselves with him* ac-
cording to the methods here pointed out, and we
shall assuredly attain to such peace as this world
can neither give nor take away. By a due know-
lege and worthy conceptions of his nature and per-
fections, this happy intimacy must be begun ; By
purity of heart, and a behaviour conformable to
his will it must be increas'd and improv'd ; And
by a regular and habitual devotion ; a *walking*
with God, and doing every thing as in his presence,
it will at length ripen into all the confidence and
sweetness of friendship. And if God be our
friend

S E R M. *friend* what *enemy* can we fear? if he be for us

II. *who can be against us?* Let us maintain and hold fast this blessed communion with him, and in all the troubles of life, and in all the horrors of death *we shall be more than conquerors.* For

Romans VIII. *neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the (peace and) love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
38, 39.

THE

LUKE XVI. 22.

THE RICH MAN ALSO DIED.

THE parable of which the text is a part S E R M. III.
contains a very lively and affecting description of the different conditions of good and bad men, of pious poverty, and worthless grandeur, both in this life and a future. It's divine author was employ'd in exhorting his hearers to the wisdom of being charitable; and dissuading them from the inconsistent folly of hoping to serve two masters of dispositions so contrary as God and mammon. But perceiving that his advice had little effect on them, for some of them *the pharisees who were covetous* (as we read at the 14th verse) *derided him*, he resolves to try another method of instruction: And since example will sometimes influence where the best and wisest precepts are ineffectual, he exhibits to his followers a moral picture, drawn in such exact proportions of truth, such lively colourings of happiness

F

S E R M. pinels and misery, so just and beautyfull a contrast of the light of virtue, and shade of vice; as cannot fail if contemplated with due attention of affecting and warming every heart, not yet totally frozen by the benumbing quality of that
 III. *love of money*, which is called by an Apostle *the root of all evil*.
 1 Timothy vi.
 10.

There was (begins he) a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar nam'd Lazarus, who was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. Strange difference of situation this! and such as at first sight seems inconsistent with the equal distributions of a righteous providence. For what is the merit of that pamper'd rich man which hath procur'd for him such a superiority and even redundance of pleasures? Is not his heart instead of overflowing with gratitude to the bounteous author of his prosperity, and melting with pity towards his distress'd fellow-creatures, is it not enervated

enervated with luxury? contracted with avarice? S E R M.
III.
and swollen with insolence and pride? yet how doth he triumph amidst the fullness of enjoyments! in the complete gratification of his every wish! Behold him glittering with gold and gems, feasting at a table sumptuously deck'd with the various products of every element, season, and clime; while painting glows to delight his eye, and music warbles to charm his ear.

Far different the scene at his palace gate! There groans the wretched Lazarus, unheeded, unpitied, under the severest and most complicated distress. Every one of those sufferings which have been singly look'd upon as strong tests of human patience, combine with cruel and united violence to overwhelm their miserable victim: In want both of health and support, in cold, hunger, nakedness and pain, he humbly petitions to be reliev'd from famine with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: A request which the context gives no reason to suppose granted. But let us proceed with the story of the parable, which now begins to present a very different prospect. *It came to pass*

S E R M. *that the beggar died and was carried by angels*
 III. *into Abraham's bosom.* That wretchedness which
 pride cou'd overlook, and hard-heartedness neglect,
 meets at length with a final period from
 the all-relieving hand of death. Lazarus having
 sanctified his poverty by an humble submission to
 his Creator's will, and a constant refusal to attempt
 the alleviation of his miseries by any methods
 contradictory to it; receives at length a far
 more than adequate, an abundant reward of all
 his patient sufferings and sorrows. His soul divested
 of it's mortal clog, rejoicing finds itself in the
 hands of blessed and benevolent beings, ready
 to convey it to that quiet port, that peacefull
 shore, where rest the departed spirits of the
 righteous. There leaving him, happy in the
 recollection of a well spent life, thrice happy in
 the expectation of a joyfull eternity, let us return
 once more to the rich man's palace. He *also died*
it seems, and was buried. The grim king of
 terrors rudely forgets the distinctions of title,
 fortune, or power; his impartial scythe mows down
 with equal sweep the towering cedars which
 pierc'd the clouds, and the low shrub that gro-
 vel'd

vel'd in the vale. Ah! what avail thee *now* SERM.
thou poor rich man thy purple, fine linnen, and III.
sumptuous fare? What comfort do thy once
boasted treasures *now* afford thee? Dost thou
now think the uncharitable disregard of thy
needy brethren justify'd by the inordinate de-
sires of luxurious pleasure, or accumulated
wealth? Didst thou then imagine when *joyning*
house to house and laying field to field and calling
the lands after thy own name, didst thou think
thy houses shou'd continue for ever? Alas! of
how small value are those large possessions to
thee, who art so soon remov'd from them all!
Thou art soon dead and buried: And well
were it for thee if this was all: Here we wou'd
gladly take our leave of thee; and having at-
tended thy funeral pomp (the last ridiculous ef-
fort of human vanity) to the magnificent mo-
nument of thy ancestors, we wou'd willingly
forbear any further enquiry after thee. But the
sacred text again expects our attention, and
commands us to view thee in the succeeding
scene. O dreadful scene indeed! *In hell he lift*
up his eyes, being in torments!

How

S E R M. How different the consequences of the same
 III. event to persons differently prepar'd for it! Death relieves the pious poor man from all his sufferings, and exalts him to never ending, never fading blifs. Death robs the guilty rich of all his enjoyments, and plunges him in everlasting woe. One is convey'd by his now kindred angels to the receptacle of good and happy spirits; where with that *peace of God which passeth understanding* he awaits the resurrection to life eternal. The other seiz'd by relentless fiends is dragg'd away to that gloom which no light ever cheers; and overwhelm'd with that despair to which no hope succeeds: Where that worm of conscience which *never* dies stings with the remembrance of a past wicked life; and the dread of that fire which is *never* to be quench'd terrifies with agonies not to be conceiv'd till they are felt: where affrighted imagination anticipates a prospect which will in reality soon appear; A burning world; an omniscient judge; Almighty vengeance; and an opening hell.

But here let us close the shocking scene:
 necessary alas! to be sometimes represented to
 us ;

us ; but too dismal to be dwelt upon longer S E R M.
than that necessity requires. And having now III.
consider'd our Lord's parable, so far as it in-
culcates those topics of instruction which I in-
tend to enforce from it, I go on to offer them
to your consideration.

The persons whom these instructions more di-
rectly and immediately concern are *first*, the
rich ; *secondly*, the poor ; *thirdly*, those who ca-
vil at and complain of the dispensations of di-
vine providence.

What then in the *First* place, is the lesson I.
which the parable now recited teacheth those
who have great possessions ? A lesson it teacheth
them very usefull, very wholesome ; but like
many other wholesome prescriptions, very un-
palatable and ungratefull. For it represents
to them in the strongest and most affecting
manner the exceeding danger and imminent
hazard of that very affluence and prosperity,
which both they themselves, and those around
them regard with so much satisfaction and
complacency.

The

S E R M. The rich man was not describ'd to us as an
III. extortioner, usurer, or oppressor ; or as having
obtain'd his wealth by any illegal or dishonest
methods: In this he had the advantage of many
rich men. He spent his fortune as the genera-
lity of those whom the world esteems the better
sort of rich men spend theirs ; in the gratificati-
ons of sense and vanity ; in high living and a
great appearance. Swelling and big with his
own happiness, he had no leisure, nor inclina-
tion to attend to, and relieve his fellow crea-
tures misery. Cou'd he descend from his *house*
of perpetual feasting to visit and console *the house*
of mourning ? He look'd on himself as absolute
proprietor ; not as *steward* only ; and so wasting
what was not his *to waste*, when his accompts
were call'd for, he had none to produce. These
were his crimes ; his punishment hath been al-
ready told. And let rich men remember him,
and tremble : For how many among them have
obtain'd their fortunes by much worse means than
he is represented to have obtain'd his ! And
how few *comparatively* employ those fortunes
to any better ends ! Some it is very certain both
laudably

laudably acquire, and nobly diffuse their great S E R M.
riches ; but this is not the case of the majority of III.
rich men ; and the case of the majority is to be
consider'd. Let them then be persuaded to stand
still and attend to their danger, while their atten-
tion will yet do them any service : They now sail
merrily along with the tide of prosperity and plea-
sure ; but let them beware lest at the end of their
voyage they sink down into that overwhelming
gulph which will *drown them in destruction and*
perdition. What then must rich men do to be
sav'd ? The holy scripture gives them plain and
full directions. Let them first of all be very certain
that their riches are really *their own* : that they have
either themselves acquir'd them by methods per-
fectly just and honest ; or have receiv'd them by
the clear and express designation of those who had
undoubted right to bequeath them. Well assur'd
of this, let them in the next place take care never
to suffer the *idol* wealth to share their hearts with
the *living* God. Full of gratitude for his bounty
towards them, let them serve, love, and fear *him*
above all things ; and trust in *him* ; not in their *un-*
certain riches. And having thus given due glory to

G

God,

S E R M. God, let them also exercise good will towards men :

III. Having *freely receiv'd* let them as *freely give* ; be as rich in good works, as in great possessions ; *ready to distribute, willing to communicate*. So shall their riches instead of contributing to their ruin, assist them to *lay hold on eternal life*.

II. The lessons which the parable we have been considering affords to the poor and needy, the distress'd and unhappy, are those of honesty and uprightness in all their dealings ; of patience and resignation to the will of God ; and of trust in his mercy and goodness towards them. But honesty must be the ground-work of all the rest. For how can men be said to submit and resign up every thing to the good pleasure of their Creator, who scruple not to be guilty of cheating and fraud, so notoriously contradictory to it ? Or how can they have any well grounded hope of the *divine support* under their afflictions, who dare to attempt the removal of those afflictions by methods repugnant to the *divine laws* ?

Let all those then who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other
other

other adversity, keep this always printed in their remembrance ; that Lazarus was not suppos'd to be *comforted* hereafter, *merely* because he had in this world receiv'd *evil things* ; no more than the rich man was to be *tormented* in another life, because in this he had *receiv'd his good things*. He might have been rich and happy in *both* worlds ; and in *both* might Lazarus have been poor and miserable : It was the *abuse* of prosperity which condemn'd the one ; while the *improvement* of affliction plac'd the other in paradise.

Consider this all ye who are poor in this world, and learn to be content with, yea and thankfull for your condition : Cou'd you now learn some wondrous secret of growing rich at once to the extent of your wishes ! How happy ye imagine such a change wou'd make ye ! —It wou'd very probably prove your utter ruin. But ye have a much greater, far nobler power lodg'd in your own hands ; even that of *turning heaviness into joy, of putting off sackcloth, and girding ye with gladness*. Ye may if ye please soon exchange distress and poverty for abundance ; and the

SERM. *light afflictions which are but for a moment, for*
III. *an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

III. They who cavil at, and complain of the dispensations of divine providence, may in the parable before us find a full answer to all their objections. The prosperity of bad men, and the distresses of the virtuous, do it is allow'd raise a difficulty not to be accounted for upon the supposition of a moral government of the world; without recurring to the doctrine of a future state, where these seeming irregularities shall be clear'd up and remov'd. Even truly good and pious persons in some of their darker and more melancholly moments, have been greatly disturb'd in their religious course, by observing the miseries which sometimes persecute the worthy and the upright; and beholding *the ungodly in such prosperity, and in no misfortune like other folk*. While others of a profane and sceptical turn have made use of this unequal and unmerited distribution, as an argument to weaken the belief of a providence; and of a divine interposition in human affairs. — Without replying to this objection

objection what yet might fairly be urg'd; that S E R M.
we are very seldom competent judges of the *in-* III.
ward intrinsic merit and *real* virtue of others;
that happiness and misery depend much less on
outward advantages than they are thought to de-
pend; that therefore judging from such external
appearances we are very liable to make false
estimates both of other men's virtue and happi-
ness; and consequently to suppose the defects of
providential equity much greater than they ought
to be suppos'd: — Without resting (I say) the
vindication of divine justice on any of these con-
siderations, let us only admit a future state,
where vice now triumphant shall be *for ever*
punish'd, and suffering virtue *eternally* rewarded;
and the whole of the objection vanishes into
smoke. Yes; we will grant it all.

Wealth, power, grandeur, with all the con-
veniencies and enjoyments they can bestow, do
sometimes attend the call and crown the wish
of the vilest and most worthless part of mankind.
But this will not *always* be the case: The un-
godly though while he lives thus merrily *he bleisseth* Psalm xlix.
his soul, when he dieth shall carry nothing away with 16, &c.
him;

S E R M. *him; his glory shall not descend after him. Now*

III. indeed he is in great power, spreading himself
 Pfalm xxxvii. *like a green bay tree; yet while we are but pas-*
 35. *sing by he is gone; and whither he goes we have*
 already heard. Virtue we allow is sometimes
 Heb. xi. 37. *destitute, afflicted, tormented: But she shall not*
 be so long. She shall soon lay aside the thorny
 1 Pet. v. 4. *diadem; and put on that crown of glory which*
fadeth not away.

Cease then ye vain and presumptuous cavillers
 against your maker's divine dispensations, cease
 to object; and learn to adore. For *the Lord is*
 Pfalm cxlv. *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works:*
 17. li. 4. *He is justify'd in his sayings, and will be found*
 clear when he judgeth. When he sendeth the
 Matt. xxv. *wicked into everlasting punishment; and admits*
 46. *the righteous into life eternal.*

JOHN

JOHN XIII. 15.

I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE.

IT is an observation equally true and com- S E R M.
mon that example is far more prevalent IV.
than precept ; that the wisest instructions and
best advice operate not on the human mind like
the silent but more forcible admonitions of a
good life. Are we not more struck with a
beautyfull portrait finish'd by the hand of a
master, than with the finest descriptions of beauty
the poet's fancy ever feigned ? And how much
greater the difference of the impression if for
the picture we substitute an Original ! Who then
can wonder if the mental eye by a natural ana-
logy to the corporeal looks on rules of virtue with
a cold approbation only ; but is animated with
admiration, with love, and a desire of imitating
virtue exemplified in life and manners ? Hence
the ancient moralists among their instructions to
their followers, fail'd not to inculcate that they
shou'd always propose to themselves the best and
most

S E R M. most excellent examples. The advice was judicious ; though it became less efficacious through want of objects to which it might safely be applied. For without disparaging those philosophers, some of whom considering the darkness in which they were involv'd, made such improvements both in knowledge and practice as may justly strike confusion into many Christians ; We must yet affirm that the best of them gave not an example fit to be propos'd as a model for general imitation.

Nor among the chosen people of God was there any such exemplar to be found. Their great Leader eminent as he was for his uncommon virtues, was yet far from perfection even in that which was the distinguished excellence of his character : *The man Moses who was very meek above all the men who were upon the earth, was yet provok'd to speak so unadvisedly, and to trespass against the Almighty, that he was not permitted to enter, but to see only before him the promised land.* He who on account of his general zeal for God's glory, and his being a signal instrument to effect the designs of providence obtain'd

obtain'd the honourable title of the *man after* S E R M.
God's own heart, was betrayed first by his inor- IV.
dinate passions, and then by his anxiety to con-
ceal the consequences of them, into the most hai-
nous and atrocious crimes. And his son and
successor the wisest among men, was seduced by
the lewd society of idolatrous women to let his
heart be turned after other Gods.

1 Kings xi.
3, 4.

It is in the revelation of the gospel alone that
we find the rule of life at once taught and ex-
emplified in unerring and absolute perfection.
He *who did no sin, but went about doing good*,
may safely be propounded as a pattern of uni-
versal imitation: His behaviour in every parti-
cular in which it is possible, and suitable to our
state and circumstances for us to copy it, ought
to be the standard of ours; and his life as the
best illustration of his doctrine shou'd be our
guide in the observance of his law. He hath
in all respects *left us an example, that we shou'd*
follow his steps: But in the following discourse my
purpose is, to point out some particular graces in
which this mirror of universal excellence shone
forth with peculiar brightness; and which are
H urg'd

S E R M. urg'd by himself and his Apostles, as the virtues
 IV. we shou'd especially and industriously imitate.

I. And First; faith the blessed saviour of the world,
 Matt. xi. 29. *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*
 From him indeed who alone deserv'd all exalta-
 tion can we learn the perfection of humility.
 Pride (it is well observ'd) was not made for
 man. Pride is an undue estimation which we
 have of ourselves on account of something which
 we suppose ourselves possess'd of, above other per-
 sons. This possession of what nature soever, to
 render it a just ground of self-esteem, must be
 valuable in itself, and meritorious in it's possessor.
Moral qualities only are of *intrinsick* value;
 They alone also imply *desert*. But consider the
 imperfection, the mixture in all human virtue;
 Consider too, that it is the gift of God; the effect
 of his heavenly assistances: And what then has
 the most virtuous man to be proud of? Sensible
 he must be of his own honest endeavours to co-
 operate with the divine grace, and to perform
 his duty; But this conscious approbation though
 virtue's sweetest reward on this side heaven, is
 not follow'd by a too high opinion of himself:
 It

It is attended with a conscioufness also of numberless frailties at best ; of some past offences perhaps which will scarce bear so soft a name : These are all his own ; the blame he cannot as the merit divide : And has not then the most virtuous man cause to be humble ?

S E R M.
IV.

Outward advantages, which are most frequently the occasions of pride, imply not necessarily any degree of merit in him who is possess'd of them ; That must arise from the manner in which they are acquir'd or employ'd : If worthily, such an acquisition or use of them is one part of the virtuous conduct before shown to be no just ground of pride : If they are mere gifts of nature, or goods of fortune descended to us from others, we may be pleas'd with, but have surely no cause to be proud of them : If abus'd, or not improv'd to the purposes for which they were given, they are great reasons of humiliation ; For they are the occasions of our sin, and will be of our misery. Of all the corruptions entail'd upon us by the sin of our first parents, there is not any so unbecoming our fallen nature, so unsuitable to our weak, our sinfull and miserable

S E R M. state, and so destructive of all means and hopes
 IV. of our recovery, as this of pride and self-conceit:
 And therefore is it, that he who came into the
 world to restore that nature to perfection and
 happiness, so strongly recommends both by pre-
 cept and example the opposite virtue of humility.

Philip. ii.
 5, 6. Tho *being in the form of God* he justly
thought it no robbery to be equal with God, yet
 when he condescended to be *made in the likeness*
of men, he chose the lowest condition of life, and
 appear'd in *the form of a servant*. To recount
 the circumstances of lowliness and poverty
 which attended his birth were needless; To
 dwell on the numerous instances of humility
 which fill'd his whole life were endless; Let us
 fix our eyes on that in which he *purposely* as he
 tells his disciples in the text *gave them an ex-*
ample.

John i. 1. Behold him who in his divine nature *was with*
God from the beginning; who in his human body
 Ephes. i. 21. *was soon to be exalted far above all principalities*
and powers, kneeling down to wash his own ser-
 vants feet! See him at whose name *every knee in*
heaven, and earth, and under the earth must bow,
 perform-

performing the meanest and most servile offices S E R M.
for the creatures his Almighty word had form'd ! IV.
Such amazing condescension calls forth our admiration ; but let us remember that it calls for our imitation too.

Our Lord in washing his disciples feet cou'd have no other motive to such an act of humiliation, but that of teaching them, and all *those who shou'd believe on him through their word*, to think no office too low, no employment too mean to be submitted to, for the service and welfare of our fellow creatures, and fellow Christians. For thus, *after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again*, thus argues the blessed Jesus with them. *Know ye what I have done unto you ? Ye call me master and Lord ; and ye say well ; for so I am : If I then your Lord and master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye shou'd do as I have done unto you.*

It is not from hence to be inferr'd, that our Lord enjoyns his followers to perform for each other, or those in a superior station for those in a

I

subor-

S E R M. subordinate, the lower offices of life in the usual
IV. and general course of things. The order of providence hath appointed inferiors by rendring to those in an higher condition needfull and convenient services, to receive from them in return, protection, support, and reward. And while the rich with liberality, with kindness, and tenderness supply the wants, and minister to the necessities of their poor brethren, they comply with the meaning of the precept here given, and may justly be said in the spirit of their Lord and master to wash their feet. But yet in any extraordinary conjuncture or emergency, where the lowest and meanest person on earth cannot be reliev'd in his distress, or assisted in his wants but by the personal service of the highest, it is the undoubted duty of the latter, by readily and chearfully rendring such service, to testify at once his humility, and his love both to his saviour and his poor brother. If the richest or greatest potentate thinks it unsuitable to his state and dignity to perform the lowest office which is necessary to the being or well-being of the poorest slave ; If the deepest philosopher or most eminent scholar

scholar supposes himself too wise or too learned S E R M.
to instruct the most ignorant peasant in the great IV.
truths of the Christian religion; it is plane
the one must think the *servant greater than his*
Lord; and the other suppose *him that is sent*
to be wiser and *greater than him who sent him*:
It is too plane that how much soever they may
abound in the riches or wisdom of this world,
they are neither wise nor *rich towards God*:
They *have not the spirit of Christ*, nor will he
own them as his; *They are asham'd of him*, and
his humility *in this sinfull generation*; and must
expect that *he will of them* and their pride *be* Mark viii. 38.
asham'd when he cometh in the glory of his Father
with his holy angels.

Universal benevolence and unbounded cha- II.
rity was another distinguish'd excellence in our
blessed saviour's character; and which he recom-
mended to all his followers with peculiar and re-
peted urgency. *A new commandment* he tells John xxiii.
his disciples *he gave unto them that they shou'd* 31.
love one another. Mutual affection in a lower
degree, and under partial limitations, was *not* a
new commandment; being inculcated by the law
of

S E R M. of nature and enjoyn'd by that of Moses. But
 IV. to love one another as Christ loved us was indeed
 John xxiii. a precept entirely new ; and which cou'd only
 34. with propriety be deliver'd by him, who never
 gave a rule without furnishing an example. In
 all his sermons to the people, in all his discourses
 to his disciples, he urges the practice of this sub-
 lime and amiable virtue in the most pathetic
 manner ; And in every part of his own conduct
 he illustrates it in the most exalted degree. This
 heavenly disposition brought him down from his
 radiant throne of glory to his humble house of
 clay : This led him about doing good ; working
 miracles of mercy, and preaching tidings of
 peace : This subjected him to poverty and hard-
 ship ; to the sting of slander, and the hiss of
 envy : And this at last nail'd him to the cross.
 And even *there* ; when groaning, bleeding, dying
 under the intolerable load of our sins, his divine
 benevolence caus'd him to pour out his soul in
 Luke xxiii. intercessions for his murderers. *Father ! forgive*
 34. *them ; for they know not what they do.* O heavenly
 love ! O wonderfull compassion ! And shall we
 not endeavour to catch at least some small por-
 tion

tion of this godlike spirit? Shall we not imitate S E R M.
in some degree this lovely pattern? He who gave IV.
it assures us that mutual love is the distinguish- John xiii. 35.
ing characteristick of his disciples; the badge by
which his followers shou'd be known. And
shall we disclaim his service, and deny his
name, by refusing to imitate his example in this
essential instance? Had he who lov'd us so well as
to dye for us, bid us *do some great thing*, exert some
heroick and difficult acts of virtue to testify our
gratitude, *wou'd we not have done it?* How much
more when the duty he thus especially requires
from us is so admirably adapted to our condition
and situation; so easy and delightfull in the per-
formance; and so beneficial in it's consequences?
And what virtue can be more suitable to infirm,
insufficient, indigent beings, than to relieve and
succour, to pity and love the partakers of the same
weak nature and helpless state? Or what duty
can be thought more becoming, or more neces-
sary in a frail and faulty creature, for ever standing
in need of pardon of his own transgressions, than
that of mercy and forgiveness to the failings and
misdeeds of his offending brethren? And O what

I

plea-

S E R M. pleasure can equal that of consoling calamity and
 IV. assuaging pain? What other blifs can diffuse
 over the human countenance a smile so sweet,
 and so bright a joy, as the consciousness of ha-
 ving wip'd the tear from affliction's faded eye?
 Whose heart so light and so deservedly light, as
 his who hath remov'd the load from a fellow
 creature's heart? Surely in this if in any respect,
 virtue may be call'd it's own reward: But it will not
 want another. He who gave the command, and
 set the example will assuredly bestow the recom-
 pence of it; The day is coming when the Uni-
 verse shall hear him pronounce; *Inasmuch as ye*
 Matt. xxv. *shew'd kindness to these my brethren, ye shew'd it*
 45. *unto me; Well done good and faithfull servants;*
 21. *Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

III. A *Third* virtue of which our blessed Saviour
 gave us a most illustrious example was his pro-
 found and perfect resignation to the will of God.
 All prayers and devotions, all sacraments and or-
 dinances are design'd to excite, and are then only
 acceptable when they do excite this humble sub-
 mission to the divine disposal. The frailty and
 imperfection of our nature will not suffer us to
 I arise

arise to such a pitch of virtue, that our obedience shall in every instance flow from that *perfect love which casteth out fear*: This it is our duty to labor and aspire after, though we can only hope to attain it in a better and happier state. On the other hand obedience proceeding from fear alone cannot be that free and *reasonable service* which God requires from his intelligent creatures. Between these extreme points lies that dutyfull resignation to his will in which consists the whole of piety. Our blessed Lord therefore though free from all spot of sin, and *made perfect in love*, yet affected not that ecstasick and rapturous devotion which his followers might have admir'd, but cou'd never hope to imitate. In this particular as in his general conduct he set before us a rational, a practicable virtue; A virtue suited to the nature which for our sakes he had taken upon himself; His piety was what ours must end in; Resignation. In early youth his diligent attendance on his *Father's business* detach'd him from all weaker connexions, and inferior cares; And throughout the whole course of his ministry he planely shew'd that he came *to work the works of*

S E R M.
IV.

Luke ii. 49.

S E R M. *him who sent him.* But most signally did this appear in the last act of his life; when he was to
IV.

complete the grand scheme of providence in the redemption of mankind by his sufferings and death. The extent, the perfection of our blessed saviour's resignation in this instance can only be judg'd by the greatness of the anguish which he endur'd; and what that was we do not fully know. The horror and amazement which he shew'd at it's approach leaves no room to doubt, but the load upon his mind was far more grievous than all the torments of his body. But how terrible soever they cou'd not shake his fortitude. He pray'd to escape them, if God so thought fit:

Matt. xxvi.
39.

If it was possible; that is, if it was consistent with the laws of Eternal justice and wisdom, and the redemption of man for which he came into the world, that *then this cup might pass from him*: But of this he acknowleg'd his father to be the sole judge; and therefore desir'd that *his will, and not his own might be done*. The condition of humanity oblig'd him both to feel, and to fear; but the strength of his resignation conquer'd both sense and passion. And now let us
remember

remember what St. Peter assures us ; that *Christ* S E R M. IV.
suffer'd for us, leaving us an example, that in this 1 Peter ii. 21.
 respect also we shou'd follow his steps. Few or
 none of us shall in all probability be call'd to the
 severe tryal of *resisting unto blood* ; If we are, let
 us look unto *Jesus, the author and finisher of our* Hebr. xii. 2.
faith, who having endur'd the cross, and despis'd
the shame, is now in his human nature for ever set
down on the right hand of God. And let us re-
 member that *if we suffer with him, we shall also* 2 Tim. i. 12.
reign with him.

But in the mean time we may shew our resign-
 nation to the divine will, Actively ; in a life of
 virtue and all holy obedience : crucifying those
 lawless affections, and sinfull lusts which *wou'd*
not that Christ shou'd reign over us ; and bringing
every thought into captivity to him. Passively ; by
 an humble submission to, and thankfull accept-
 ance of all those crosses and disappointments,
 those afflictions and troubles, with which God
 may think fit to try our faith, exercise our pa-
 tience, correct our faults, or improve our virtue.
 And if we thus copy our blessed saviour's pattern
 of both doing and suffering his Father's will in
 such

S E R M. such instances, and on such occasions as are of-
IV. ferr'd to us, we shall through his merits be ad-
mitted to a participation of that glory and happi-
ness which his human nature by obedience ob-
tain'd. They who keep his commandments, and
follow his example shall be own'd as his faithfull
servants and friends in that day, when *the Lord*
himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ;
with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the
trump of God : When the dead in Christ shall rise
first, and shall thenceforth for ever be with the
Lord.

1 Theff. iv.
16, 17.

JOHN

JOHN XIII. 15.

I HAVE GIVEN YOU AN EXAMPLE.

AS our blessed saviour's example and his S E R M.
V. alone is in all respects perfect and complete, it is the only proper pattern to be propos'd to the imitation of all his followers. In no kind or degree of virtue is it defective, or falls short of the standard of truth and goodness; though it affords more frequent and more striking instances of those graces which are most conducive to the glory of God, and the good of mankind; and which have the greatest tendency to purify our nature, and to restore it to that perfection and happiness to regain which our Lord had taken it upon himself. Some of these remarkable and shining excellencies I have already faintly and imperfectly delineated; remarking at the same time the peculiar urgency with which they are recommended to our imitation. And in further considering this fair and fruitfull

S E R M. fruitfull subject, I wou'd lead your thoughts to the
V.

contemplation of our blessed master's character and conduct; not so much in his exertion of any particular virtues, as in his observance of two general rules, by which he constantly and invariably govern'd himself in all his actions; which are indeed firm and vital principles of all virtue; and of every thing that can be really acceptable to God, or beneficial to man.

- I. The *First* of these rules which thus influenc'd our saviour's whole conduct, was a constant preference of moral virtue to all ceremonial and ritual observances: Of those duties which are of eternal and unchangeable obligation to such as are only positive, and instrumental. That there is a different degree of worth and value even in moral qualities, That some are more excellent in their nature, and of more lasting duration than others, no one can be ignorant who attends either to the reason of the thing; or to the declarations of the new testament. Much more is it evident beyond all doubt, that all qualities and actions which are *good in themselves*, are of higher estimation, and are always to be preferr'd
before

before all *instituted* and *auxiliary* duties; which S E R M.
latter are indeed of no other obligation than as V.
they are commanded; and of no other value
than as they influence us to, and assist us in the
practice of the *primary* or *moral* virtues. The
general conduct of mankind hath indeed always
contradicted this law of eternal reason and just
proportion: Among the Jews of old, and a-
mong Christians of every age and denomina-
tion; Among those of the Romish communion
especially, but among the members of all com-
munities in some degree, the shadow hath
been embrac'd for the substance; and the means
mistaken for the end. But if the children of
Israel had not (as they certainly had not) any just
plea to excuse this great corruption, much less
can Christians allege any thing to extenuate the
guilt of it. Our religion is founded *in spirit and*
in truth. It's morality is pure, perfect, and
sublime; It's positive institutions few, simple,
and significant: And it's divine author whose
life explan'd and illustrated every part of his doc-
trine, hath taught us by various passages in both
the superiority and pre-eminence of moral

K

goodness

S E R M. goodness above all external and ritual obser-
V. vances.

When question'd by the scribes and pharisees
Matt. ix. 10, for keeping company with, and thereby encoura-
&c. ging men of bad morals and scandalous cha-
racters, he first vindicates himself from the
charge by declaring that he associated sometimes
with such persons, not to encourage them *in*, but
to reclaim them *from* their vices; to *call them to*
Repentance: As physicians visit not men in full
health, but those whose diseases and infirmities
require their assistance. And he then applies
to this particular case, and adopts as a general
and invariable maxim the sentiment long before
Hosea vi. 6. deliver'd by the prophet; that God *desir'd mer-*
cy and not sacrifice. That in every instance
where positive rites, even such as the oblation of
those sacrifices which had been appointed by God
himself interfer'd with, and prevented works of
mercy and charity, the former shou'd always be
for that time, and in those circumstances omit-
ted; and the latter which are the most accepta-
ble sacrifices to the best of Beings shou'd be at-
tended to, and perform'd.

The same rational and amiable doctrine he SERM.
repeted on another occasion to the same sort of V.
persons, the scribes and pharisees; who found Matt. xii. 1,
fault with him for suffering his disciples unre- &c.
prov'd to pluck and eat the ears of corn on the
sabbath-day. To which reproof he replies by
quoting a case wherein a duty of exactly the
same nature with the strict ceremonial rest of
the sabbath, had been violated on the very same
account by one of their fore-fathers eminent both
for his rank and piety. Are my disciples (he ar-
gues) more culpable for appeasing the cravings
of hunger by plucking and eating this corn on
the sabbath day, than David was for eating the
shew bread, food strictly forbidden to all but the
priests? Yet who ever blam'd him for paying
greater regard to a natural necessity than to a
ceremonial prohibition? No more do my dis-
ciples deserve rebuke for satisfying the same ne-
cessities by a breach of your formal manner of
hallowing the sabbath: in which indeed you
mistake it's nature and end. *For the sabbath* Mark ii. 27.
was made for man, not man for the sabbath. It
was appointed to secure to him amidst the em-

S E R M. ployments and avocations of life some certain
 V. time, some fix'd returning period, wherein he might worship and praise his maker, celebrate his works of creation and providence, and more fully acquaint himself with his will. The prohibition of all labor so much insisted on by you, was design'd to prevent the same attention to worldly business which on other days was lawfull and proper; but if allow'd on the sabbath day, might interfere with, and defete the good ends of the institution: But it was never intended to be insisted on with such rigor, as to be detrimental and grievous to man, in whose behalf the sabbath itself was ordain'd.

And as our Lord here teaches us the lawfulness of relieving the calls of nature by an occasional neglect of a positive injunction; in the next occurrence which is recorded of him (as it is plac'd by all the three evangelists who have taken notice of it) he work'd a miracle in confirmation of his former doctrine, that mercy was preferable to sacrifice: Breaking again the ceremonial rest of the sabbath by healing a man with a wither'd hand in the synagoge before the Jews:
 and

and justly exposing their blind perverseness and manifest insincerity ; who scrupled not to profane the sabbath (according to their notions of it's sanctity) in preventing the death of *a brute animal* which might be attended with some loss to themselves ; and yet made it a ground of accusation against Jesus, that he heal'd *a man* on the sabbath day.

Though the examples already cited might seem sufficient to prove the truth of the observation, that our blessed saviour prefer'd moral to positive duties, yet it may be proper to produce one other instance where the question concerning the worth and excellence of each is fully stated and finally determin'd. The pharisees hearing that Christ had expos'd the ignorance, and silenc'd the cavils of the sadducees concerning the resurrection, and a future state, *were gather'd together* in their turn to dispute with and oppose him. And one of them who was a scribe, or an expounder and Doctor of the law, imagin'd he cou'd propose a question which Jesus wou'd not find it so easy to resolve. Accordingly he demands to be inform'd *which was the great commandment*

S E R M.
V.

Matt. xxii.
34, &c.

S E R M. *mandment in the law?* Among the multitude
V. and variety of precepts enjoyn'd by Moses and the prophets, which ought we to esteem as *the first commandment of all?* But this learned scribe soon found himself disappointed in his hope of being able to puzzle and perplex our saviour; who without hesitation replied to his question, that a religious regard to the one true God, and such a sincere and supreme love of him, as wou'd produce universal obedience to his will; that this was the *first and great commandment*. And that *the second* which was *like unto* and closely connected with it, was *to love our neighbour as ourself*; and of course to render *to* him all those offices both of justice and charity, which we shou'd desire to receive *from* him. And more-over that these were not only the two great and principal commandments, but that the whole train of instituted duties and ceremonial rites on which they laid so great stress, without the practice of these chief and cardinal virtues, was of no worth or advantage at all. For *on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*. Convinc'd with the reasonableness, and pleas'd with the
the

the goodness of the answer, the scribe immediately acknowledges the truth of it; and declares (as the passage is related by St. Mark) that thus to love God and one another *is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices*. From whence it is evident that he had propos'd the question in reference to, and concerning the comparative excellence of moral and positive duties; As it is, that our Lord had so understood and determin'd it from his reply to the scribe's observation; that *he was not far from the kingdom of God*. That under the influence of such sentiments he wou'd be well prepar'd for the reception of his pure and spiritual religion here; and for the enjoyment of pure and eternal happiness hereafter. In the place now consider'd our blessed saviour so clearly ascertains, and so fully determines the superior worth and value of inward piety and moral goodness above all external and positive observances, that I shou'd abuse your patience in citing any other; or insisting further on the proof of it.

I proceed therefore to recommend to your observation and imitation another general and leading

II.

ing

S E R M.

V.

Mark xii. 33,

34.

S E R M. ing rule, agreeably to which our Lord fram'd
 V. and directed his whole conduct and behaviour. And this was, that though he preferr'd the duties of Eternal and moral obligation, he by no means neglected those which were duties by institution and command only. He gave to the former the first place, without refusing to the latter the place due to them. It is very justly observ'd, that there is scarce any folly or frailty more generally adherent to mankind, than that of concluding when upon comparison of two objects we find one of them considerably more valuable and excellent than the other, that therefore that other is of very little or no value at all. Unreasonable as this inference is, we are too apt to act in consequence of it; *He therefore who*
 John ii. 25. *knew what was in man*, and so knew that his exhortations to pay the chief regard to moral virtues, might lead us to a neglect of those instrumental duties which are necessary to us in our present state, took sufficient care to guard us against so dangerous a mistake: A mistake which notwithstanding this weakness of our judgments, we cannot fall into but through our own pride
 and

and perverseness, or at least our inexcusable care-
lessness: Since both the rule and the example
which are set before us in the gospel teach us to
think in a wiser and better manner. Our saviour
throughout the whole course of his life shew'd
the most decent and regular regard to the po-
sitive duties of the mosaick law.

S E R M.
V.

The first circumstance related concerning
him after his nativity is his submission to the
painfull initiatory rite of circumcision; and we
next find him by whom *all things were made* pre-
sented with the customary sacrifices in the temple
made with hands. Before he enter'd on his mi-
nisty he repair'd to John to be baptized of him;
which the baptist with due deference declining,
our Lord urges his performance of the ceremony;
adding that it was fit and *becoming thus to fulfill*
all righteousness: which is a plain declaration
that *some part* of righteousness consists in a due
observance of such religious rites, as have any
tendency to promote and preserve either inward
purity and piety; or outward decency and or-
der. John in his preparatory ministry baptiz'd
with water unto repentance; and Jesus though

Luke ii. 21.

22, 23.

Matt. iii. 13.
&c.

L

in

S E R M. in no need of repentance wou'd not neglect his
 V. baptism ; but chose it as the time and opportunity of being baptized in a visible and extraordinary manner with the Holy Ghost. And in the execution of his priestly and prophetic office to which he was now anointed from on high, he observ'd all such positive institutions as were calculated to increase and establish true religion. He taught that works of necessity must, and that works of charity ought to be perform'd on the sabbath-day ; and by his example also he taught that the public worship ought to be attended on it. It was in the synagogue that he met with the object of his divine benevolence ; Nor was his presence there casual or rare : St. Luke assures
 Luke iv. 16. us that it *was his custom to go into the synagogue on the sabbath day.* Neither did he think it favourable of superstition to observe other solemn
 Matt. xxvi. festivals. He prepar'd for and kept the passover
 17.
 John vii. 14. with all due order and solemnity ; He appear'd also and taught at the feast of tabernacles ; And
 x. 22. he attended the feast of dedication, though an institution merely human ; being appointed by no express command of God ; but by the authority
 of

of the Jewish church : And hath thereby taught S E R M.
us the duty of complying with such observances, ^{V.} 1 Mac. iv. 59.
while they are enjoyn'd with moderation, and
directed to the purposes of devotion. And as he
neglected not the rites of the law of Moses, he
instituted in his own system of religion two of
perpetual and universal obligation : Baptism for Matt. xxviii.
the reception of converts and proselytes into it, ^{19.}
which is of undoubted necessity where it may
be had ; And the Lord's Supper in which he
hath absolutely commanded all Christians who
have the opportunity, to commemorate the me- Luke xxii.
ritorious sacrifice of his death till his coming a- ^{19.}
gain to judgment.

And can any one *now* pretend that our saviour
in giving the due preference to moral virtue hath
abrogated, or even slighted positive duties ? That
he has warmly recommended the end and sub-
stance of religion, the love of God and man ;
but hath taken no notice of the means which in
our present state of imperfection are necessary to
form and preserve this divine temper in our souls ?
Whoever entertain such notions and act accord-
ing to them, at once condemn the example of

S E R M. their saviour, and refuse to abide by his express

V. decision of the question: Which is, that *the weightier matters judgment, mercy, and faith* ought in the first place to be practis'd and regarded; but that positive ordinances, even those of the lowest rank, and smallest importance, (for of such he there speaks) ought not in their due place and proportion to be neglected.

Matt. xxiii.
23.

How then can any who call themselves Christians imagine that they are too *philosophical* or too *spiritual* to be oblig'd to the observance of those institutions which Christ hath in his gospel ordain'd; and which when attended with seriousness and devotion as *means*, not rested in as *ends*, are of admirable efficacy to promote our proficiency in all that is truly good and virtuous; when the author of the faith they profess, who stood in need of no helps, no instruments, no means of grace, yet condescended religiously to observe the rites of the church and nation in which he liv'd!

Or how (on the other hand) can *vicious* and *immoral* Christians suppose that they shall reap
any

any benefit from the most exact attendance on S E R M.
external duties, from *keeping sabbaths*, and *recei-* V.
ving sacraments; when the Saviour in whom they
pretend to believe hath taught them in every
sermon which he preach'd, and by every action
of his life, that *not he who saith Lord, Lord,* Matt. vii. 21.
but he (and he alone) who doth the will of his
Father shall enter into the kingdom of heaven!

ECCLESI-

ECCLESIASTES XII. 13.

LET US HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF THE
WHOLE MATTER; FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS
COMMANDMENTS; FOR THIS IS THE WHOLE
DUTY OF MAN.

SERM.
VI.

IT is the wisest among men, and the greatest
among princes, whose words, (whose last
words) these are; his character on both accounts
demands our respectfull attention; and what he
delivers to us will be found well to deserve it.
His first setting out in life gave the happiest pre-
sage of his future conduct. *Solomon* (we read)
loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David
his father. And God rewarded his early piety by
an extraordinary exertion of divine favor. *The*
Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and said,
Ask what I shall give thee. The same goodness
which permitted, directed his choice: For to
overlook and neglect every object which cou'd
glitter in the eyes of a youthfull monarch; and
passing

passing by triumphs, pomps, and pleasures, to S E R M.
confine his wishes to the attainment of that single VI.
qualification which might enable him to fulfill
the duties of his exalted station, and *to judge his* 1 Kings iii.
people with discernment between good and bad; 9.
This (one may venture to affirm) shew'd a great-
ness of sentiment, and a goodness of heart, which
cou'd only be inspir'd by *that wisdom which is*
from above. And now the Almighty agreeably
to his usual goodness rewards the virtue his grace
had produc'd. He gave the prince the wise and
understanding heart which he had ask'd in such
perfection, that as there *had been none before, so* 12.
neither arose up any like unto him after him: And
he gave him moreover *what he had not ask'd,* but
by neglecting obtain'd, *both riches and honors* in 13.
such abundance, that in this respect also *there*
was no king like unto him in all his days.

Happy Monarch *who hadst thus the Lord for*
thy God! Thrice happy while constant in thy
duty to him! But O deplorable instance of hu-
man frailty! Fatal consequence of undue sensual
indulgences! He who in his early youth loved the
Lord his God, and desir'd wisdom above all
things,

S E R M. things, by giving himself up to excessive and in-
VI. ordinate pleasures, and *loving many strange wo-*

1 Kings xi.
1, 4.

men, was seduc'd in his old age to let *his heart be*
turned after other Gods. But he who *in wrath*
remembereth mercy, though he punish'd this in-

11, 12.

gratefull apostacy by rending the kingdom from
his family, yet left not the unhappy King to pe-
rish in his folly ; but before he took him hence
brought him to a sence of his sin, and a recol-
lection of the unworthy returns he had made to
his Supreme Lord and benefactor. Many parti-
cular passages in, and the general tenor of the
whole book of which the text is a part, shewing
that it was compos'd by Solomon after his repen-
tance and return from his transgressions. Super-
added therefore to his superior wisdom, this his
last work gives us his experimental knowlege.

Ecclef. i. 16.

He tells us that *his heart had great experience*.

And what were the fix'd opinions the settled
judgments which these joint sources of instruction
enabled him to form? *Vanity of vanities, saith*

2.

the preacher ; vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

And this emptyness and insufficiency of all hu-
man satisfactions he proceeds to exemplify and
illustrate

illustrate in respect of those objects which seem S E R M.
most likely to reward, and are therefore most apt to VI.
engage the eager pursuits of mankind : All which
he himself had try'd. He began with that which
indeed appears to bid fairest towards yielding a
calm and undisturb'd content ; *He applied his* Ecclef. vii.
heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wis- 25.
dom and the reason of things. Yet the success of
his attempt by no means answer'd his hopes : He
found that *in much wisdom was much grief ; and* i. 18.
that he that increaseth knowlege increaseth sorrow.
Meaning (no doubt) that he who regards literature
and science though an excellent mean to enlarge
the understanding, and to acquire the advantages
of life, as his *chief* happiness, and *ultimate* end,
will find it so perplex'd with error and darken'd
by doubt, so bewilder'd with various and discord-
dant opinions, and confin'd by the narrowness of
human intellect, that his vexation at being able
to know no more, nor with more certainty
and clearness, will really increase in proportion to
what he knows. But Solomon determin'd to
find out (if possible) *what was that good for the* ii. 3.
sons of men which they shou'd do under the heaven

M

all

S E R M. *all the days of their life*, next applied himself to

VI. seek it in quite contrary paths. *He gave his*
 Ecclef. i. 17.

ii. 1. *heart to know madness and folly; He prov'd it*

10. *with mirth, and enjoy'd pleasure; Whatever his eyes desir'd he kept not from them; nor withheld his heart from any joy.* But his disappointment was

ii. 2. now much greater than before; *Such laughter, and such mirth* he soon found to be *mad*; and that though his wisdom cou'd not ensure him complete

13. satisfaction, yet *it excelled folly as far as light excell'd darkness.* From the employment of his wealth in works of magnificence and taste, he next

5, 6. sought pleasure and contentment; but the *gardens and orchards and pools of water* of which he tells us, when once completed and brought to perfection, had given all the delight they were capable of giving: Their beauties become familiar, were to

11. *him* beauties no more. So that when *he looked on all the works that his hands had wrought, behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was no profit under the sun.* Nor yet says he in the accumulation of wealth, or largeness of possessions is this shy happiness to be found. For this is a desire in it's nature incapable of satisfaction;
 tion;

tion ; the appetite for wealth increas^{S E R M.}ing by being gratified. *He that loveth silver, shall not be sa-*^{VI.}
tisfied with silver ; nor he that loveth abundance^{Eccles. v. 10.}
with increase. And now after all these fruitless
searches for what appear'd so difficult if not im-
possible to be found, the wise man tells us he gave
up the enquiry as hopeless and desperate ; And
went about to cause his heart to despair of all the
labor which he took under the sun.^{ii. 20.}

And is *despair* then the last sad legacy be-
queath'd to succeeding ages by the wisest of
men ? Is this the whole instruction his sage expe-
rience affords ? It is *not the whole*. While he
confin'd his views to this world, though he com-
prehended in them all it's glories and pleasures,
he sought for perfect happiness in vain : but when
he extended his prospect and look'd forward in-
to futurity, instead of doubt and disappoint-
ment he found certainty and comfort. Seve-
ral doctrines to this purpose he lays down as cer-
tain and incontestible principles. At the last
verse of the *second* chapter he tells us, that
God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wis-
dom, and knowlege, and joy : but to the sinner he

S E R M. *giveth travel.* Hence instructing us, that amidst
 VI. the vanity of all things below, virtue which
 wou'd recommend us to the favor of the Al-
 mighty was an object worthy our most assiduous
 cultivation; and sin which wou'd provoke his
 displeasure, to be avoided with the utmost care
 and circumspection.

Ecclef. vii.
 29.

The justice and goodness of God in *having
 made man upright*; and his own folly and wick-
 edness in having *sought out those inventions* which
 had render'd him vicious and miserable, he in
 another place marks as indisputable truths. And
 in the text he gives us the sum, the result, and
 conclusion of the whole matter: *Fear God, and
 keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty
 of man.* I have complain'd heavily, nor without
 cause of the vanity and vexation of all human af-
 fairs and pursuits; but I can however assure you
 for your comfort, that there is a labor which
 shall not be *in vain*. Fear God: Fix deep in your
 minds a reverential, religious regard to the
 Supreme Being, the Lord and Father of all;
 and let this vital principle actuate all your con-
 duct, and influence you to keep his command-
 I ments,

ments, and then you will have an hope not sub- S E R M.
ject to disappointment. The performance of VI.
this which is your whole duty, will secure to
you the perfection of happiness, and a reward
worthy your most assiduous labors; when *God* Ecclef. xii.
shall bring every work into judgment. 14.

By the fear of God we are to understand an humble and affectionate awe, not a base and servile dread of him; A reverence like that which a dutifull child feels for an indulgent, but prudent parent; or a loyal subject pays to his wise and gracious sovereign. A fear founded in a just sense of God's absolute supremacy, and infinite perfection; and of our own weakness and unworthiness: Such as will throw us prostrate before his adorable majesty with the deepest humility of soul and body, and will indeed make us tremble to offend him: but which is at the same time consistent while we endeavour to serve and please him with the warmest gratitude, the most exalted affections, and the firmest confidence in his unvarying goodness.

Fear without any mixture of love or hope is the despairing passion of accursed spirits; Love
unal-

S E R M. unallay'd by all remains of fear is the bliss of
VI. angels, and just men made perfect: A sentiment and disposition arising from, and compounded of both these affections, is best suited to man in his probatory state; conscious of his own imperfections, but fully persuaded of the divine benignity. Such a temper when habitual and wrought into the frame of our minds, will produce that sincere and entire resignation to the will of God, which is the proper and permanent principle of all piety and virtue. From this principle will proceed (what from no inferior one is to be hop'd) that observance of all his commands, in which consists the whole duty of man. Other and weaker motives may excite to lower degrees of virtue; or rather to the appearances of it. A sense of honor and desire of fame; natural temper and constitutional complexion; prudential regards to interest and credit; these may differently affect different persons, so far as to restrain them from some vices, and to engage them to perform some good actions. But none, nor all of these without a religious regard to the Supreme Being, will ever influence us to that
universal

universal virtue which it is our duty to cultivate S E R M.
and practise. VI.

And a regard to morality as the word is generally understood by those who value themselves upon being *mere moral men*, will seldom be found a sufficient basis to support a *truly moral* conduct. *True morality consists* in the discharge of all those duties which are incumbent on rational creatures related to God, and to all other rational beings. This comprehends not only the social duties, and the rules of prudence, but every part of self-government, and virtuous discipline: And especially it includes the highest reverence for the Almighty and Eternal *Cause* and *Origin* of all things; and the sincerest desire to render him all that honor, worship, and service, which are due from dependent creatures to their creator and governor; their preserver and continual benefactor.

Such a regard to morality if real and genuine, wou'd induce men with attention and impartiality to examine into a system of doctrines, which is receiv'd and believ'd by the generality of serious and intelligent persons who have so examin'd it, as a revelation from God. And if
after

S E R M. after a fair and full enquiry they found it agree-
VI. able in it's declarations and precepts to the divine nature and attributes ; and it's authenticity supported by such outward evidence as they wou'd admit for proof of other distant histories or facts ; this regard to truth and moral fitness wou'd doubtless influence them thankfully to receive, and carefully to observe it. And if this idea of morality be conformable to those which the *mere moralist* has fram'd of it, he has differ'd from the *Christian* rather in word than in reality ; Or however differ'd from him only in the want of the same means and opportunities of searching and knowing the revel'd will of God. But if he has confin'd his notions of virtue within any narrower limits, let him take heed lest he leave out of his catalogue of duties many of those which he owes to himself, and which are necessary to the purifying and perfecting his nature ; lest he be still more deficient in those religious regards which are due to the author of all the good he has receiv'd, or can rationally expect : And *finally* let him beware lest his whole system of morality being founded *not on a rock but on the*
the

the sand ; on fine drawn speculations, instead of S E R M.
firm and active principles, shou'd when the floods VI.
of passion swell, and the storms of temptation beat
against it fall, and crush him in it's ruins.

And let the Christian and the professor of religion on the other hand beware, that he rests not in the orthodoxy of his faith, or the goodness of his principles without a rectitude of behaviour agreeable thereto. No doctrines or opinions how true, or of how beneficial a tendency soever in themselves, are of any further use or advantage to him who receives them, than as he suffers that tendency to have it's effect, and to engage him to a suitable conduct. That religious belief which appears not in our practice, exists not to any purpose in our minds.

If then we *believe in God, be we carefull to* Titus iii. 8.
maintain good works : If we *fear him, let us keep*
his commandments : They *are not grievous*. A 1 John v. 3.
reasonable tryal will convince us, that the observance of them leads to the most lasting peace and truest pleasures in this life ; and in the next we shall find it our *great reward*. This sincere endeavour to discharge our whole duty in a course

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of

S E R M. of religious virtue, will lead to, and end in our

VI.

greatest happiness. It will preserve us from those vexations from which all his wisdom, his greatness, and affluence cou'd not save Solomon. For while we expect no more from this world than it was design'd to afford ; while we are contented with moderate satisfactions, and reasonable enjoyments, and place our chief hope in a future life ; we shall not be liable to those disappointments which generally arise from a too high estimation of temporal good things ; and an expectation of greater comfort than is really to be found in them. And while we look up to a far *greater than Solomon even to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith*, we shall not be too deeply affected with the real evils which may befall us in this world: Remembering, that the end of sufferings which however grievous, are but *temporal*, will be the beginning of that happiness which shall be *eternal*: When all good men shall re-

^{2 Tim. iv. 8.} receive from their Lord that *crown of righteousness, which he will give them in that day when he shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to his gospel.*

Romans ii.
16.

2 C O R.

2 COR. I. 12.

OUR REJOICING IS THIS, THE TESTIMONY OF
OUR CONSCIENCE.

MANY have been the disputes among the S E R M.
writers on morality concerning the foun- VII.
dation of moral obligation; though what parti-
cular actions or course of behaviour shou'd be
denominated virtuous or vicious, hath seldom
been matter of their doubt or disagreement. The
duties indeed of piety towards God, of justice
and beneficence to our fellow-creatures, as well
as those more immediately respecting ourselves,
are so agreeable to our nature and constitution,
our situation and circumstances, that they can-
not fail of recommending themselves to the reason
and judgment of every unprejudic'd and serious
person. Such a One can hardly doubt *whether*
he is obliged to the practice of them. And had
greater regard been paid to the dictates of the
same plain sense and unbiafs'd judgment, they

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wou'd

S E R M. wou'd have taught him with equal clearness the
VII. cause and reason *why* he is so. They wou'd have shewn him that his own sincere belief, and firm persuasion that such and such actions were his duty, and such others violations of it, was if not a formal and direct obligation to perform the one, and avoid the other ; yet so essential to the reality and validity of whatever may be the foundation of moral obligation, that without it no such obligation can subsist. For let us consider the grounds of moral obligation suggested by different writers on this subject ; most of which are indeed very sufficient causes and motives of right behaviour ; but all of them require this additional motive, the conviction of conscience that such behaviour *is* right. If (with one set of philosophers) we suppose that each man's own private happiness is the proper object of his principal regard ; and that we are therefore oblig'd to a virtuous conduct because it bids fairest to make us happy ; Or (if with another) we conclude that the publick welfare and common good ought to be the end of our views and pursuits, and that our obligation to practise virtue arises from it's tendency to promote

mote the greatest and most general happiness; S E R M.
In either case we must refer to the inward appro- VII.
bation of the mind, before we can make out a
complete obligation. When a man sees and is
convinc'd that it is his duty to promote his own
greatest happiness, though by the loss of present
ease and pleasure; or to advance the publick good
at the expence of his private interest; he will of
course perceive that he is strictly obliged to what-
ever conduct has the greatest tendency to bring
about those ends. But unless he was thus
convinc'd that they are the fittest objects of his
pursuits and endeavours, he would not be under
a moral obligation to use the means by which
they might be attain'd. His own approbation
of them as ends which he ought to intend is ne-
cessary to make them obligatory to him. If (again)
this obligation is suppos'd to arise from the fitness
and relations of actions and things, it wants the
further assistance of a clear perception and con-
scientious conviction, that it is our duty to act
suitably to this fitness, and these relations, be-
fore it can be really and effectually binding.
And those who resolve all moral obligation
into

S E R M. into the will of God, shou'd remember, that
VII. without the perswasion of conscience that it is the duty of a free and reasonable creature to obey the divine will, no obligation to such obedience can be made out. No one indeed who has just notions of the nature and perfections of God, and to whom his will is truly represented and fairly propos'd, can doubt of his own obligation to observe and practise it: As he will both perceive it to be in every particular agreeable to the unbiased judgment of his own mind; And as moreover his conscience wou'd approve of an unreserv'd submission to all the commands of a perfectly wise and good Being, the just and gracious governor of the Universe; though his understanding shou'd not be able to discern the necessity or the reason of them all. But supposing a man to be misled into wrong conceptions of the Deity; taught for instance (as multitudes have been taught) to regard him not as an equitable and kind, but as a capricious and arbitrary ruler; commanding and forbidding without regard to reason, and rewarding and punishing without regard to desert; Such a one wou'd not surely be

be *morally*, or in point of duty obliged to obey S E R M. VII.
the will of a Being of whom he conceiv'd in such
a manner ; any further than his own judgment
and conscience approv'd and determin'd it to be
right.

Nothing is here meant to disparage, or weaken the force of any of the foremention'd inducements to a virtuous conduct ; they are all good and sufficient *motives* to it: Though *from the union of them all* perhaps, a *complete and perfect moral obligation* can only be establish'd. But whether consider'd separately or united, our perception and conviction that they are real and true grounds of obligation is necessary to make them such to us. We are bound to act both in such a manner, and upon such principles, as the judgment and persuasion of our own minds (*that candle* which *the Lord* hath lighted up in them) sincerely and deliberately approves. To perform such actions as we think to be good and right ; and to perform them *because* we think them so. We may see different reasons for forming this judgment of them ; But that we *do* judge them such, is a circumstance essentially necessary to
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Proverbs xx.
27.

S E R M. the completion of any moral obligation to perform them.
VII.

Thus much I thought proper to premise with a view to convince you, that it is the adherence to the sincere dictates of conscience, and a strict obedience to it's determinations, which can alone stamp the mark of virtue on all our designs and actions. I am now to shew you, that the testimony of our consciences, that we have thus honestly follow'd their directions, is a reasonable and substantial cause of the most perfect and most durable joy.

One previous observation only give me leave to make, on the infinite importance of which it is to us, not to be deceiv'd as to the nature of that testimony of conscience which is to be the ground of our rejoicing. We are but too apt to deceive ourselves in this case; and yet fatal will be the consequences of an error which in our situation cannot be innocent. The religious and moral obligations of all men are proportionate to that knowlege of their duty which they have or might have obtain'd. They in particular (as hath just been observ'd) who have right notions of
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the attributes, and a clear knowlege of the S E R M. VII.
will of God, will feel themselves strongly admonish'd to observe it by *the law written in their hearts*. This is the case of all Christians who are allow'd the use of their bibles. The system of truths contain'd in them they as Christians believe to be a revelation from heaven; and they will find it on the fullest examination a system worthy of God to revele, and of man to receive: A religion design'd and calculated by it's all-wise and benevolent author to lead his free and reasonable creatures to the greatest and most lasting happiness. Such a religion therefore thus known and approv'd becomes an invariable rule of life and manners; an unerring guide and director to conscience; which has now no other business left upon it's hands, but to enquire with attention and impartiality, into the true sense and genuine meaning of this religion: So far at least as relates to that behaviour, which it enjoyns and recommends to us. And this is so planely laid down in the new testament, that the most inexcusable negligence only can overlook, or the most wilfull perverseness mistake it. Sobriety, righteousness,

S E R M. ousness, godliness ; the love of God and one another are in every page of the gospels declar'd to
VII.

be *the whole duty of man*. He (in particular) who assures us that *our rejoicing is the testimony of our conscience*, acquaints us at the same time what they must testify to secure to us this joy. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world*. And in his defence before Felix the apostle gives the same account
A&S xxiv. 16. of the testimony of his conscience. *Herein* (saith he) *do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men*. We see then what kind of testimony St. Paul's conscience bore him ; that he truly and sincerely endeavour'd throughout the uniform tenor of his life and conversation to obey the whole will of God ; and to perform all his duties to the utmost of his power both to his maker, and his fellow creatures. And by a similar conduct we must engage our consciences to afford us the like testimony, if we expect the same satisfaction from their evidence. One man's conscience may witness that he is *orthodox in his faith* ; another's
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that he is exact in the *forms and externals of religion*; A third may be well assur'd that he performs *some duties* with regularity and constancy; and a fourth may satisfy himself for the breach of *all*, with the testimony of his conscience that *with much confidence* he relies on the merits of his redeemer, and thinks that confidence sufficient to justify and save him.

S E R M.
VII.

But if our consciences can allege nothing further in our behalf it wou'd be happy were it possible for us to buy off their evidence. When we come upon our trials they will be fairly but closely examin'd; and this examination will infallibly detect our self-delusion and hypocrisy. For they will certainly testify, that by our wilfull violations of their injunctions, our repeted neglects of their remonstrances, and disregard of their admonitions, we had grievously harass'd and sorely wounded them; that though by these repeted strokes they were become in some measure callous, (their finer feelings being blunted and destroy'd;) yet as they cou'd not wholly divest themselves of, nor yet be easy under the painfull sense of guilt, they were forc'd for the sake of

S E R M. present ease, to have recourse to these erroneous
 VII. opinions, and false interpretations of scripture ;
 to quiet their remorse, and allay their fears :
 That they shou'd never have receiv'd such fallacies, had they not been first blinded and enslav'd
 by those appetites and passions, which ought to
 have been subject to their direction and controul : And that even at last they had entertain'd such notions, rather as what they *hop'd possibly might*, than as what in their most serious hours of reflection they *believ'd really were true*.
 —This heavy charge founded in truth and fact, will be fully prov'd against all those Christians who have endeavour'd to find in the holy scriptures any allowances for vice and immorality, by the *thousand witnesses* within their breasts : and the Almighty judge will pronounce a sentence, which (far from giving them cause of rejoicing) will condemn them to everlasting chains, and prisons from which there is no release.

But if with St. Paul's our consciences can testify, that we have sincerely, and (as far as human infirmity wou'd permit) effectually endeavour'd
 to

to practise whatever we knew to be our duty S E R M. VII.
without partiality or reserve; we have then indeed a sure ground of rejoicing; *A joy which no* John xvi. 22.
man taketh from us: A joy which if we possess, we want little more; and if we want, we can but ill relish any other. This is in reality that cordial drop which infus'd into the cup of mortality, will add fresh flavor to it's richest draught, and overcome the bitterness of the most unfavoury: This is that *true riches*, that *eternal possession*, which unlike all other wealth will support and comfort us at our latest hour; will accompany us to, yea and *beyond* the grave; and will even engage the all just judge at the last great hearing and general assize to award in our favor his final decree.

In order to place the advantages of a good conscience in the strongest and fairest point of view, it may be proper to consider the sweet complacency and exquisite satisfaction which it adds to a prosperous estate; the firm support it affords in an adverse; the relief it can administer at the hour of death; and the courage

SERM. rage it will inspire at the day of judgment.

VII. But as it wou'd take up too much time at present to enlarge on these particulars, they must be reserv'd for the subject of a future discourse.

SERMON

S E R M O N II.

2 COR. I. 12.

OUR REJOICING IS THIS, THE TESTIMONY OF
OUR CONSCIENCE.

I N in a former discourse on these words I at- S E R M.
tempted to convince you, that the Apostle's VIII.
assertion of the testimony of conscience being a
proper cause of rejoicing, is so certainly and
strictly true; that there are indeed no other rea-
sonable grounds of a religious and moral joy: As
the compliance with the sincere persuasion and
unbias'd judgment of our own minds, is the
very quality which gives the virtuous color to all
our designs and actions.

I then endeavour'd to guard you against any
dangerous mistakes in a point so important, by
referring you to St. Paul himself; and consulting
his account of the nature of that testimony of
conscience, which he declares to have been his
rejoicing.

S E R M. rejoicing. And I am now to shew you that such
VIII. a testimony as he describes is indeed a rational and well-grounded cause of the most complete and perfect satisfaction.

This I shall endeavour to do by representing the heightned happiness it bestows *on prosperity*; the firm support it affords *in adversity*; the relief it can administer at *the hour of death*; and the courage it will inspire at *the day of judgment*. It may by some perhaps be imagin'd, that the comforts of a good conscience, are of little consequence in the season of prosperity, and amidst the pleasures of abundance; and that the various enjoyments attending such a state are able to silence the clamors of remorse, and stifle the accusations of our own hearts. But Superficial observers alone can think in this manner; The discerning eye sees, and the guilty heart *feels* the Contrary. But the subject of this discourse does not lead me to consider the large abatements which an evil conscience will make, in summing up the account of worldly happiness; It is my present more agreeable employment to describe the exquisite delight which a self-improving mind can
add

add to the external advantages of prosperity : But S E R M.
VIII.
what penfil can emulate the brightness of the
solar beam ? or what tongue can exprefs the
heart felt joy of that applauding conscience, which
enlivens, comforts, and cheers the soul with an
influence not less beneficial and benign, than the
vegetating grain, and the teeming earth receive
from the warmth of meridian suns.

Represent to your imaginations an upright and
uniformly good man, happy in his constitution
and circumstances, his relations and friendships !
Must not such as these be his pleasing, his joyfull
reflections ? *Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget
not all his benefits ! Every day will I bless him, and
praise his name for ever and ever : For in Him I* Acts xvii. 28.
live, and move, and have my being. His gift is my
sound and undisturb'd intellect ; my unbroken
and vigorous health : His voice bids the blood flow
pure and temperate through my veins ; His hand
hath brach'd the well-compacted nerves. It is he
also who hath blessed my increase : From his
bounty I and mine enjoy all the comforts and
conveniencies of life ; and the exquisite delight
of relieving those who want them. But How shall

P

I thank

S E R M. I thank him for his social blessings? For the virtuous woman who hath been a crown to her husband; the

VIII.

wise sons who have made a glad father; the daughters who have done virtuously; and the faithfull Friend who hath been the medicine of my life. I am

indeed unworthy of the least of his favors; but I trust not altogether ungratefull for them: My conscience reminds me of many failings, many imperfections; but it acquits me of all deliberate and habitual disobedience to the commands of my gracious and bounteous benefactor: His blessings I endeavour to employ to his glory, and the happiness of my fellow-creatures; I therefore humbly hope they will be continued to me: The best and greatest of them, that inward peace which gives this true relish to all my outward comforts, cannot but through my own fault be taken from me; And for the rest I will rely without one misgiving doubt, on the power and goodness of that Almighty protector, whose fa-

Psalms cxlv.

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Rom. viii, 28.

vor I have so largely experienc'd; whose *tender mercies are over all his works*; and whose peculiar providence maketh *all things work together for good to them that love and serve him.* Bless

him

him therefore again *O my soul!* and all that is *within me* bless his holy name!

S E R M.
VIII.

From the pleasing contemplation of this happy saint, let us turn our eyes to a different object; and while we behold the distresses of suffering virtue, let us attend to it's secret comforts. We imagine perhaps yon poor, infirm, indigent creature to be one of the unhappiest among the race of mortals; loaded as he is at once with every ill under which human infirmity may be suppos'd to succumb. But he seems if we observe him more narrowly to rise superior to his weight of woe; and though he begins with complaint, he ends with exultation. *Naked* (he crys) *came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither*: This last sad stroke hath stripp'd me of *all*. The poor remains which a series of ill-success had hitherto spar'd, are now at length totally exhausted; and the hard censures of a cruel world which never acquits the unfortunate, point the stings of poverty with double sharpness. Yet all were little cou'd I endure it *alone*: But how shall I support my chil-

SERM. dren's ruin? The bare apprehension of it hath
 VIII. sunk their beloved mother to an untimely grave;
 and can I behold the sad reality? How have I
 deserv'd this accumulated wretchedness?

Deserv'd! I have *not* deserv'd it. Unavoid-
 able misfortunes, and unforeseen disappoint-
 ments, not design'd dishonesty, or deliberate
 vice have involv'd me in this distress. Before
 the Almighty I prostrate myself; *and repent in
 dust and ashes: For how can man be justified with
 God?* But though conscious of many frailties
 and failings, my heart hath been stedfast in it's
 purpose of obedience to him; I have liv'd in no
 course of known and wilfull sin; and have tru-
 ly repented my occasional transgressions: And
 wretched as my condition is, I wou'd not change
 it for an earthly diadem at the price of offending
 my heavenly Father. Robb'd as I am of every
outward comfort, *I will not remove my integrity
 from me; my heart shall not reproach me so long
 as I live.* And may I not then hope for favor
 from him to whom the secrets of that heart are
 known? May I not hope that *he loveth while he
 chasteneth*

chasteneth me, and *scourgeth* with intention to receive me? S E R M.
VIII.

Why art thou then cast down O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God. To him who executeth judgment for the oppressed I will commit my cause; To him who giveth food to the hungry will I look for support; and to his care will I entrust my dearest children, who faith by the mouth of his holy prophet; Leave thy fatherless children; I will preserve them alive. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? God is not a man that he shou'd lie. His providence is an inexhaustible fund; his promise an assurance of success: How then cou'd I repine at my own inability to provide for those whose guardian and Father is GOD? Jerem. xlix.
11.
Numb. xxiii.
19.

Thus are the blessings of prosperity enhanc'd, and the sorrows of adversity diminish'd by the reflections which an approving conscience can suggest. But it's value will be still more conspicuous, if we consider the comfort it will afford us in our last great conflict at the hour of death.

SERM. death. When we come to lye upon that last
VIII. bed from which we must be rais'd by strength
not our own, we shall then begin to know the
full worth, and infinite importance of a quiet
conscience. All the riches and honors, the de-
lights and pleasures of this world are for ever de-
parting; *The world itself recedes and disappears.*
The closest and dearest connexions of nature and
affection are bursting asunder; and the tears
and lamentations of our sorrowing friends wound
our souls with even sharper anguish, than the
dying body suffers from the distemper's unre-
mitting rage. The alarming thought of an im-
mediate appearance before an Almighty Being
of such perfect purity, cannot but affect even the
pious soul with awfull apprehensions of it's ap-
proaching change. Trembling we stand upon
the verge of both worlds; and *the testimony of*
our consciences that in simplicity and godly sinceri-
ty we have had our conversation in that we are
leaving, can alone enable us to quit it with calm-
ness; and chearfully to remove to that which
lies before us. And this testimony will indeed
encourage us to meet our last hour, not only
without

without terror, but with comfort and joy. If our S E R M.
hearts after a fair and impartial examination can VIII.
clearly testify, that we have *so believ'd the doc-*
trines, as to have *obeyed the precepts* of the gospel;
that our lives have either been *innocent from any*
great offence throughout their whole happy course,
or that we have truly repented that part of them
which was otherwise; that we rely on the mercy
of our Creator and the merits of our Redeemer
for the pardon of our forsaken not continued sins;
and the acceptance of our sincere though imper-
fect endeavours; *If our hearts thus approve us*,
we are clad with armor of proof; and may
boldly march on to face the grim tyrant, and
defy his dart, and despise his sting. For what
(saith the true Christian) what *is thy sting O*
Death? Is it not *sin?* But sin repented of hath
stung in vain: The blood of Christ hath heal'd
the wounds it made. And *where O Grave thy*
victory? Thanks be to God! the victory is ours;
through him who by dying vanquish'd death;
and by his rising again secur'd our immortality.
To him then my *Faithfull Creator*, and mercifull
faviour

S E R M. faviour will I *commit my soul; He will not leave*
 VIII. *it in hell: My flesh also shall rest in hope. I will*
lay me down in peace and sleep; till at the sound
of the last trump I awake with his likeness, and rise
again to eternal glory.

To this last dread scene then let us turn our
 eyes; and see whether a good conscience can af-
 Pet. iii. 10. ford us a refuge, when *the earth and the works*
that are therein shall be burnt up. Nothing else
 will then stand us in any stead. Sensual delights
 and worldly cares may for a time so engross the
 mind, that it shall not feel the want of it's own
 approbation. Men of natural high spirits and
 sanguine hopes may a while perhaps support ad-
 versity, though destitute of this inward comfort;
 And stupidity and total irreligion on the one
 hand, or enthusiasm and misapplied scripture on
 the other, may sometimes make those pass easily
 out of the world, who have liv'd very far from
 unblameably in it. But *in that day when God*
shall judge the secrets of men, nothing shall avail
 them but a pure conscience. *When all nations*
are gathered together, the judgment set, and the
books opened, the dead shall be judged out of the
things

things which are written in the books, according to SERM.
their works. VIII.

What their works have been their consciences will testify ; and their behaviour plainly declare ; But the condition of the self-condemn'd, while they are awaiting the Judge's sentence, is not the subject of our present consideration. Let us observe those who standing on the right hand, shew by their looks, that *their hearts condemn them not*. With humble confidence they approach their God. They pretend not to perfect and unfinning obedience ; but to sincere repentance and faith unfeigned. They plead, that they are clear of all habitual guilt, and obstinate impenitence ; And they insist, that the blood of the Lamb hath cleansed them from the stain of their *forsaken* sins. *The Lamb once slain*, but now arbiter of the universe allows the truth and the force of their plea ; But what tongue can express, what heart can conceive the transports that swell their glowing breasts, while they hear the invitation to eternal bliss from the mouth of him who died to procure it. *Well done good and faith-* Matt. xxv.
full servants ; Ye have been faithfull over a few 21.
Q *things ;*

S E R M. *things ; I will make ye rulers over many things :*
 VIII. *Enter ye into the joy of your Lord. Come ye blessed*
 Matt. xxv. *of my father ; inherit the kingdom prepar'd for you*
 34. *from the foundation of the world.*

Consider what hath been said ; for it much imports you to consider it. And may God of his infinite mercy so influence all our hearts, that no allurements of present pleasure, no dreams of ambition, or lust of gain may ever prevail on us to be guilty of any thing, that shall destroy their peace and confidence towards him ! But that amidst all the changes and
 1 Tim. I. 19. *chances of this mortal life, still holding faith and a good conscience,* we may at the great day of account hear the joyfull sentence of acquittal and acceptance pronounc'd by our faviour and our judge ! To whom with his Father and holy spirit be ascrib'd all honor and glory, all thanks and praise now and for ever !

A SERMON

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd at St. PETER's Church in
Liverpool;

On Saturday June the 14th, 1760:

At the VISITATION of

The Right Reverend Father in God,

E D M U N D

Lord Bishop of C H E S T E R.

2 CORINTH. VI. 6.

BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEGE.

AT the first verse of this chapter, and the S E R M. IX.
twentieth of the preceding, St. Paul acquaints his Corinthian disciples with the nature of the office and employment in which he, and his brethren in the sacred ministry were engag'd. That their office was of no less dignity than that

Q 2

of

S E R M. of *ambassadors* sent by the son of God, to offer
 IX. to mankind terms of reconciliation with their Almighty Creator, and Sovereign Lord; and their employment of no smaller importance than to be *workers together* with their blessed master in the prosecution of his benevolent design: To *beseech* the world *not to receive this grace of God in vain*; not to frustrate by their perverseness and obstinate infidelity that gracious dispensation of mercy and pardon, which he at the price of his own blood had obtain'd for them, from his heavenly father.

The Apostle then proceeds to point out the qualifications which wou'd be necessary for all those who either in that, or in succeeding ages, shou'd be set apart for the continuance of this salutary work; the preaching this word of re-
 2 Cor. vi. 3. conciliation. *Giving no offence* saith he *in any thing*; lest if any part of our conduct shou'd be found deserving of censure, *the ministry* itself through the fault of the ministers *might be blam'd*. Nor must they be contented he farther assures them with a bare abstaining from evil, a mere
 4. negative virtue; *but must in all things approve themselves*

themselves as ministers of God. And then he S E R M.
enumerates a long and shining catalogue of gra- IX.
ces, all which wou'd be requisite on various oc-
casions, and in different circumstances to the due
execution of the sacerdotal office. Some of them
were principally and more immediately necessary
during the infancy of Christianity, and the per-
secution of it's professors; and especially of it's
teachers. Of others the nature and excellence
is such, that in no period of time, nor amidst
any advantages of worldly establishments can the
true church of Christ be safe and flourishing, if
its ministers are destitute of their benign influ-
ence. Of the latter sort are the qualifications
mention'd in the text.

Purity of heart and of manners, and a due
proportion of sacred knowlege are so essential to
the clerical functions and character, that as he
who is endued with both can hardly fail of
worthily executing his important office; so he
who is greatly wanting in either of them, will
in vain attempt to compensate for the deficiency
by any other accidental advantages.

The

SER M. IX. These latter may if rightly applied, adorn the outward appearance of the church and her ministers; as well fancied ornaments and a becoming attire may make the loveliest person appear more lovely. But in the former consists the true and simple beauty of the spiritual body; As color, proportion, expression, and grace complete that of the natural: unassisted by drapery, and unaided by art.

The word Ἀγνότης here render'd *pureness*, though in it's frequent and common acceptation it is us'd to express the single virtue of chastity, yet in it's primary and original sense signifies *purity in the abstract*; purity universal; and is therefore properly applied to the whole of life and manners. The term Γνώσις though it usually means knowledge in general or of every kind, is doubtless in this place design'd to denote knowledge of that nature and sort which is most immediately requisite for the work of the ministry. And in discoursing further on these words I shall beg leave after a short reflection on the absolute necessity of a regular behaviour and general good life, to the due execution of our holy function,

tion, *First*, to point out some particular virtues, S E R M.
a proficiency in which, wou'd I apprehend ren- IX.
der us and our preaching most acceptable, and
most serviceable to our people; and *Secondly*, to
mention some branches and parts of knowlege,
which seem most necessary and usefull to us, as
teachers and ministers in the church of Christ.

Unto the wicked saith God what hast thou to do Psalm 1. 16.
to declare my statutes? Or that thou shouldst take 17.
my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest in-
struction and castest my words behind thee. Thou Romans ii.
therefore art inexcusable O Man! whosoever thou 1, 18, 19, 20.
art, who teachest another, and teachest not thy-
self: Thou who knowest God's will, and art a guide
of the blind; a light of those which are in dark-
ness, an instructor and a teacher, through break-
ing the law dishonorest thou God? How striking
and unanswerable are the reproofs here levell'd
against those preachers of the Jewish Law who
practis'd not agreeably to what they knew and
taught! But with how much greater force do
they upbraid and strike dumb the wicked and im-
moral ministers of the gospel! The heart which
can harden itself against these exhortations is
incapable

S E R M. incapable of being soften'd by any human efforts.

IX. But the impossibility that he shou'd *teach* his people *with authority*, who acts in a manner which must render him the object of their contempt; And the certainty from the experienc'd power of example above that of precept, that such an one, *though he cou'd speak with the tongue of men and angels*, wou'd yet undo by his life all his preaching had done; These things are so evident to the most superficial observers, that it is needless to enlarge further on them. And it is so also (I persuade myself) for a more agreeable reason: That the regular lives and good morals of the Clergy in general leave little occasion for admonitions on this head. I proceed therefore to point out some particular qualities, the cultivation and exertion of which wou'd I conceive derive a very beneficial influence to our public teaching, and other ministerial labors.

Every excellence shone out in that divine person who in all points *left us an example, that we shou'd follow his steps*. Yet were there some virtues in that pattern of Universal perfection peculiarly conspicuous, and eminent above the rest;

I

And

And which too he recommended with emphati- S E R M.
cal earnestness to the imitation of his followers. IX.

Learn of me (saith he) *for I am meek and lowly* Matt. XI. 29.
in heart. And again; *Love one another as I* John XV. 12.
have loved you. Humility and mildness of be-

haviour, with the most unbounded benevolence to the whole creation of God, were the striking features in our blessed Saviour's character; and the subjects of his constant exhortations to his hearers. These virtues in that degree in which he practis'd and enjoyn'd them are indeed peculiar to his religion; and ought therefore to be cultivated with particular care by all the professors of that religion; and with still greater affection (were it only in respect to mere propriety of behaviour) by it's ministers and teachers. Regard also to the success of our ministry shou'd engage us earnestly to aspire after those graces, which by their natural tendency will most effectually promote it.

To *preach the word, to be in-* 2 Tim. IV. 3.
stant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort; to console or alarm, soothe or awaken the consciences of our people, as their different cases and circumstances may require; All this is our

R

bounden

S E R M. bounden duty and proper business. And reason

IX.

and experience concur in convincing us, that nothing can contribute to our successful execution of these difficult offices, so much as the constant exertion of those amiable qualities which will recommend us to the *affections* of those with whom we are concern'd. Barely to mention the influence which a courteous carriage and sweetness of behaviour has even over the most perverse and untractable dispositions; and the disgust which an overbearing and churlish manner will give to persons of the best and calmest tempers; just (I say) to mention the different consequences of these different deportments, is sufficient I hope to engage all those, whose particular duty it is, to do all possible good to the souls of their brethren, to practise those virtues which will render their spiritual labors most beneficial, by making their persons most acceptable.

Nor must we think it sufficient to behave with cold civility and outward smoothness to our
 Philip. II. 5. people. The same *mind must be in us, which was in Christ Jesus. What manner of spirit he was of* we cannot be ignorant without ignorance of
 the

the bible. If we consult the gospels, there shall we find in his preaching the law, in his life the pattern of benevolence: Of a charity unheard and unthought of before his coming; and only to be practis'd on the principles he hath taught us. And if our hearts are warm'd with a sincere desire to follow the example which he hath given us, we shall want no other admonition, nor any stronger incitement to perform our clerical duties with constancy and zeal. This disposition will induce us all in our different stations and capacities, to labor with unfeign'd and unabating earnestness to set forward the salvation of all men; and more especially of those who are committed to our charge: It will engage us to perform all the parts of our function, not because we are obliged to perform them by human laws, or through fear of incurring the censure of our superiors; but out of an earnest desire to instruct, improve, and confirm our people in the practice of universal virtue, as the only method of attaining eternal happiness: It will engage those of us whom providence hath blest'd with the happy ability, to abound in all works of

S E R M.
IX.

S E R M. mercy and charitable offices to the sick, the
IX. needy, and the distress'd which are among us :

It will dispose the divine whose talents and attainments enable him to oppose gainfayers, and to vindicate the cause of his favour and his truth ; to remember while he *earnestly contends for the faith*, that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God* ; and to be more careful to preserve the meekness of heavenly wisdom, than to wound with the sharpness of human wit : It will influence those who are unfortunately compell'd by the iniquity of others and their own necessities, to have recourse to legal methods for the recovery of their just rights, to maintain the peacefull spirit of the gospel amidst the strife and contentions of the law ; and to put an end to the latter by the gentle efficacy of the former, whenever any reasonable terms of accommodation shall be propos'd, or accepted. In a word ; this benevolent and heavenly temper will naturally diffuse throughout our whole conduct and behaviour such gentleness and candor, such compassion and charity, as cannot fail of having an effect even on the most perverse and refractory nature ; and
of

of engaging our hearers to attend to and love that S E R M.
doctrine, of which they behold such amiable IX.
fruits.

Another virtue (and the only one I shall at present mention) which I conceive must have a great influence on our people, is such a moderation with respect to the good things of this world, and such a degree of heavenly mindedness, as may convince them, that we are ourselves thoroughly sensible of the infinite difference between *things temporal* and *things eternal*; and fully persuaded of the certainty of the latter. Too much is doubtless expected from us in this particular both by enthusiasts, and by those who repine at our legal establishment; as though we had not the same natural wants to be supply'd, or the same innocent desires to be gratify'd with other men. A decent competence according to our merits, and our order and station in the church, is our due both by the laws of God and man. It is highly reasonable also for those who have families to make a moderate provision for them out of the profits of that profession, to which
(with-

S E R M. (withdrawing themselves from all other em-
IX. ployments) they have devoted their whole lives

and labors. But when this is done, nothing can excuse any further solicitude for worldly riches.

There is no evil disposition more severely censur'd in the gospel, than the desire of amassing

Matt. VI. 21. immoderate wealth: *Where our treasure is, our*

hearts are sure to be also: And if our whole at-

tention is engag'd in *laying up treasures upon earth*, how can we be believ'd to place our chief

trust, and hope, and delight in God? If we *take*

anxious thought not only *for the morrow*, but for

far distant years, which we may probably never

see, with what face can we exhort our hearers to

seek *First the kingdom of God and his righteousness?*

And if we whose business it is to study and

understand the evidence of our religion, and the

nature of the happiness it promises, can yet neg-

lect all it's exhortations to liberality and charity,

contempt of the world, and heavenly affection,

through a sordid desire of hoarding up heaps of

useless gold; how shall we far from converting

those who are without, afford grounds of suspicion

that we do not ourselves firmly believe the doc-

trines

trines we preach ! What advantage shall we give S E R M.
to the enemies of our faith ! And what offence to IX.
our weaker brethren !

May the woe denounc'd against all those by
whom such offences come, awaken all to *take* Luke XII.
heed and beware of covetousness ! a vice the most ^{25.}
opposite to the Genius of Christianity ; and con-
sequently most inconsistent with the character of
Clergymen.

But the time reminds me to proceed in the Se- II.
cond place to mention some branches and parts
of knowlege, which I apprehend to be of prin-
cipal use to us as teachers and ministers of the
Church of Christ.

Science in it's widest and most comprehensive
circle may be render'd subservient to true reli-
gion ; and every species of human learning when
the attainment of judicious and pious persons,
will assist them either to prove, or explain, en-
force, or adorn some part of *sacred* knowlege.
But this last was doubtless meant by the Apostle
in the text ; as it alone is strictly speaking the
knowlege necessary for the ministry : In which
however we must include those preparatory and
initiatory studies, without which a competent
skill

S E R M. skill in our profession cannot be attain'd. These

IX. being acquir'd, the first step in Divinity shou'd naturally be the diligent study of the holy scriptures: It wou'd doubtless be *the first*, did we not live in an age which by it's fondness for sceptical writings, obliges us not only to be well grounded in the evidences of natural and revel'd religion; (which every Christian ought to be) but to study and examine, in order to be able to answer and refute the objections urg'd against the truth of them. The old ones have been vamp'd up anew, and set off with all the advantages of artificial eloquence; and what is wanting in reason and argument, is made up in subtilty, and often in scurrility.

As ministers of Christ and teachers of his religion it wou'd be both criminal and scandalous in us not to be able to prove the truth of it; and to shew the weakness of the sophistry which is urg'd against it: Nor is the task so difficult as may be imagin'd. In many excellent * performances

* Several of the answers to Lord Bolingbroke's posthumous works; and Leland's view of Deistical writers: which last, written by a dissenting Clergyman, deserves I am humbly of opinion, the perusal and praise of the clergy of *all denominations*.

mances publish'd within a few years, every difficulty rais'd to oppose Christianity hath been answer'd with such precision and clearness, such force of reason and strength of argument, that it hath receiv'd (as truth always receives) advantage from examination, and honor by being try'd.

S E R M.
IX.

When by a carefull perusal of some of these writings we are enabled to answer the objections against the reasonableness and certainty of *the hope that is in us*, our next employment shou'd be to *read, mark, and digest* those holy scriptures, in which that hope is revel'd. Besides the general obligation incumbent on all Christians to *search the scriptures*, we are particularly bound to be much conversant in them; As at our ordination we solemnly engage to *apply ourselves to the study of them; out of them to instruct the people committed to our care; and to teach nothing as of necessity to eternal salvation, but what we are persuaded may be prov'd by them.* And with good reason is this promise requir'd from us. For from this fountain of truth we must learn the nature both of God, and of the religion

Off. Ordain.
Priests.

S E R M. IX. gion he hath revel'd to us in it; and shall see the perfection of the one as our utmost end and happiness; and of the other as the best adapted means to attain it. We shall from hence perceive and shall be able to expound to others, the wisdom and goodness of God in the great scheme of salvation projected before the creation of Man; open'd and discover'd to different persons, with different degrees of clearness, in several ages of the world; till *in the fullness of time* it was completed by the incarnation and birth of our Redeemer. Hence also, we shall learn to unfold to our people the true and spiritual nature of his religion; consisting in the love of God and man; in the great duties of piety, righteousness, and charity: And enforc'd by the most awfull sanctions, the certainty of a judgment to come, and subsequent rewards and punishments. And if to a careful perusal of these holy writings, we add that of some of those helps for the better understanding them, of which many excellent ones are extant, we shall perceive the references and applications to the different customs of the age and people when they were compos'd; we shall be able to distinguish

distinguish between those instructions and decisions which relate to the Christian life in general and at all times, and those which were adapted to the circumstances and controversies of the first ages of Christianity ; and we shall learn (what is very necessary for us to learn) to explain every passage of scripture, so as to make it consistent with the general tenor, and all other plain parts of it ; not founding doctrines, and building systems upon single and detach'd texts ; without regard to connexion and coherence, or the main drift and design of the writer : a practice which has given rise to superstition and fanaticism in every age ; and which at this day supports the enthusiasm of all those *who are sincere* among the *methodists*.

And by a due application to this repository of instruction, we shall acquire another part of knowledge, which I propose to mention (in the *last place*) as essentially requisite for Clergymen : The knowledge I mean of the nature and offices, the duty and obligations of that profession, to which we have devoted ourselves, in the fight of God and his church.

S E R M. To be ignorant of his own proper business, is
 IX. shamefull and criminal in any man; and the
 crime and the reproach is aggravated in propor-
 tion to the importance of the employment: How
 high then must they rise, when the employment
 Acts XX. 28. undertaken, yet not understood, is *to feed the
 church of God which he hath purchas'd with his
 own blood!* What still enhances the blame, is
 the possibility and even easiness of acquiring a
 necessary knowlege of our sacerdotal duties. To
 be subtile metaphysicians, or profound divines;
 to shine in the school, or determine from the
 chair, can be the acquisitions of those few only,
 whose genius leads, and whose leisure hath ena-
 bled them to excel in those departments: But
 to preach the word of God with sincerity and
 zeal, and to perform the other duties of a paro-
 chial minister with assiduity and affection, re-
 quires no *uncommon* reach of abilities; nor any
 Matth. X. 1, extraordinary heights of learning. Our blessed
 &c.
 Mark III. 14, Saviour's instruction to his disciples before he sent
 &c.
 Luke IX. 1, them forth to preach the gospel; and those of St.
 &c.
 Paul in his epistles to Timothy and Titus, con-
 tain such rules and directions both for our lives
 and

and teachings, that we cannot fail of gaining S E R M.
from them a complete knowlege of our duty as IX.
we are ministers of the *catholick church* of Christ.
And the obligations incumbent on us as clergy-
men of the *church of England*, we shall learn
from a carefull perusal of her liturgy and articles;
her constitutions and canons: these containing
the laws by which our ministration is directed
and bound. We have valuable illustrations and
comments on them all; and one in particular
on the last mention'd (which perhaps most wan-
ted illustration) worthy of it's excellent * author;
whose life and labors did honor to his function,
and service to religion. In these usefull works,
and in many admirable discourses, charges, and
pastoral letters address'd by our Bishops to their
clergy, and for the general benefit made publick;
not only all the parts of our duty, and the several
offices of our ministry, but the most discreet and
judicious method of performing them, to the
greatest edification of our people, are explain'd
with

* The late Arch-Deacon Sharp. See his charges on the Canons relating to
the parochial Clergy.

S E R M. with the utmost perspicuity ; and recommended
IX. with the most persuasive earnestness. So that it must in truth be owing to the most inexcuseable inattention if we are ignorant of any particular, which as ministers of the gospel we ought to know. But I am so far from suspecting those to whom I speak of a negligence so blameable, that I have all along meant to address this imperfect sketch of the knowlege most necessary for the ministry, to my *younger brethren only* ; whose late admission into holy orders may make such hints not wholly useless to them : From others, my superiors in learning and abilities as well as age and experience, I shall be always desirous to learn. I am abundantly convinc'd they want no advices which I am able to offer ; And I am I trust on good grounds persuaded, that they will not stand in need of admonitions to a practice agreeable to their knowlege. Without detaining them therefore with unnecessary exhortations, I will conclude with these words of St. Paul, containing at once a summary of our duty, and a most powerful motive to the performance of it : A motive which must strongly and equally affect the most selfish,

selfish, and the most benevolent heart: *Take heed* S E R M.
unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; for in doing IX.
this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear 1 Tim. IV.
thee. 16.

A SERMON

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at St. NICHOLAS's Church in
Liverpool:

On Sunday August 17th, 1760:

Being the day of the

ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION,

For the children educated in the Charity School.

MATTH. XXV. 40.

VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, INASMUCH AS YE
HAVE DONE IT UNTO ONE OF THE LEAST OF
THESE MY BRETHREN, YE HAVE DONE IT
UNTO ME.

SERM.
X. **T**HERE cannot be a stronger or more
powerfull inducement to every good work
and labor of love, than what our blessed Lord
here offers to our consideration; And in order
to give it it's due weight and full force, it will
be

be proper to recollect the several relations in S E R M.
which he stands to us : Viewing him in every capa- X.
city, we shall see that his acceptance of our good
works as done unto himself, is a most affecting
incitement to be abundant in them.

As Jesus Christ is our teacher and instructor,
as we profess belief in his doctrines, and acknow-
lege the excellence of his morality, we are to
the last degree unreasonable and absurd, if we
violate or neglect that principal duty which he
so frequently insists on, and so earnestly recom-
mends : As he is our Lawgiver so constituted by
supreme authority, we are disobedient and rebel-
lious in the highest instance, if we transgress that
great and fundamental law, which every page of
his gospels declares to be of universal force, and
perpetually binding. But the argument urg'd by
our Lord in the text, receives it's greatest strength
and peculiar energy, from considering him as he
is our *Redeemer* and *Mediator* ; and will hereaf-
ter be our *Judge*.

That man by the abuse of that freedom of
will without which however he had been inca-
T pable

SER M. pable of virtue, became an object of Almighty
 X. wrath ; That God thought not fit to forgive his
 sin, nor remit his punishment, without such satisfaction
 to justice and the honor of the divine
 Law, as he was wholly unable to make ; That
 to expiate his guilt, and prevent his misery, Jesus
 Christ the son of God undertook in his own per-
 son to pay the forfeit he had incurr'd ; That *he*
 Tim. II. 6. *gave himself a ransom for all*, and redeem'd the
 whole human race from eternal ruin at the price
 of his most precious blood ; and having thus sa-
 tisfied his father's justice ascended up again on
 Hebrews VII. *high, where he ever liveth to make intercession for*
 25. *us* ; That this mercifull saviour and kind medi-
 ator requires with particular and repeted earnest-
 ness, that we shou'd abound in all acts of charity
 and compassion towards our poor and suffer-
 ing brethren ; declaring that he shall look on
 all such as done unto himself :——These are
 the clearest and most certain doctrines of that
 revelation which we profess to receive as a sys-
 tem of truths deliver'd to us from God. And
 if that profession be made with sincerity and
 seriousness, we can want no motives to works of
 mercy

mercy and charity. Do we in good earnest be- SER M.
lieve that the Eternal son of God left his throne of X.
glory, and his father's bosom? took upon him
our nature; in that nature led a poor, despis'd,
persecuted life, and suffer'd a most cruel and ig-
nominious death, to save us from everlasting hor-
rors? that the weight of our crimes made his *soul* Matt. XXVL
sorrowfull unto death? our sins nail'd him to the 38.
cross, pierc'd his side, and extorted from him
that dolefull cry, *My God! My God! why hast* Ibid. XXVII
thou forsaken me? That in all this bitter agony 46.
he died that we might live for ever? And do we
doubt? do we hesitate whether we shall relieve
and comfort this blessed Redeemer, this wonder-
full Friend? Relief and succour he asks at our
hands; and has sent his substitutes to receive it.
The vicious and vagrant beggars, the idle and
impostor come not indeed from *him*; yet to
these we owe the charity of due correction, and
such wholesome discipline as may reform and
amend them. But the sick and disabled, the
aged and infirm, the widow and the Orphan,
the prisoner and the stranger; All in short who
labour under the pressure of real wants which

S E R M. they cannot by any honest methods remove; ALL,

X.

ALL these, are messengers sent by our saviour and Redeemer, to receive such supplies to their several necessities, as our abilities will permit, and our hearts will dispose us to afford to him who died to save us. If our hearts be not *hard as the nether millstone*, they will overflow with tenderness and liberality towards his poor and distress'd representatives; and let us not be too scrupulously fearfull of exceeding our ability in the assistance we give them. That indeed as all our other expences ought to bear a due proportion to the circumstances of our fortunes, and are the demands of our families; We are to give alms, as well as perform our other duties with *discretion*: And discretion and generosity are very consistent, and may both be consulted in the exercise of our good works. They who have *much* may give at once *prudently*, and *plenteously*; and are indeed most wisely provident, when most extensively charitable: for *what they give to the poor they lend to the Lord*; and what is so given, will be one day repaid with large increase. *They who have little may do their diligence gladly to give of that*

Prov. XIX.

17.

that little ; and if they are mercifull after their S E R M.
power, he who estimates the benefaction by the X.
 heart of the donor, not the largeness of the pre-
 sent, will approve and *love* them as *cheerfull gi-*
vers. The widow's *farthing* was graciously ac- Mark XII.
 cepted ; as well it might from a benefactress 42, &c.
 who was so nobly generous, as to give *all that she*
had, even all her living. But *mites* will not be
 accepted from *rich* widows ; *Little* will not satisfy
 from those who have *much* : Let not then the
 narrowness of our hearts, or profuseness in our
 own expences make us turn our backs on our
 needy brethren ; and in them on our affronted
 Saviour. His amazing benevolence caus'd him
 to suspend *the glory which he had before the world*
was, to procure our pardon and purchase our
 happiness ; and do we refuse to supply the ne-
 cessities, and mitigate the pains of his suffering
 brethren, which he feels as his own, through the
 fear of diminishing the hoarded thousands we
 neither want, nor can enjoy ? He endur'd
 through his whole life the severest hardships, and
 underwent at his death the most exquisite tor-
 tures to deliver us from the bitter pains of eter-
 nal

S E R M. nal death ; And cannot we part with our idle
 X. superfluities to relieve the real wants which he
 calls his own ? Do we indeed chuse to furnish
 out entertainments greater than we can relish,
 purchase rich apparell more than we can wear,
 keep servants and equipages that we do not
 want, and can scarce employ ; and squander
 away our money on the most ridiculous objects,
 and unmanly trifles, rather than feed and cloath,
 console and cherish *his* friends, and *his* brethren
 who shed his precious blood for our salvation ?
 Is he continually at God's right hand making in-
 tercession for us, praying for our repentance, and
 pardon, and eternal happiness ? And when he
 solicites our charity to his indigent brethren,
 and assures us he shall look on it as shewn to
 himself, have we either the heart, or the impu-
 dence to reject his suit ? I hope we have not.
 I trust that none who hears me has a breast so
 steel'd against every gratefull sentiment ; so de-
 void of every tender and generous affection.
 But if there be a man form'd of such marble
 materials, let him *in time* bethink himself what
 answer he will make to the expostulations of his
 injur'd

injur'd saviour, when he shall be revel'd from S E R M.
Heaven in flaming fire. X.

We believe that he shall come to be our Judge. 2 Thessal. I. 7, 8. Te Deum.
Daily we make profession of this faith; and it is both agreeable to reason, and to the express declarations of scripture. He to whom *the Father hath committed all judgment*, assures us that John V. 22. when the time appointed for it is come, a very strict enquiry will be made into every part of our past lives and actions; and that particular notice will be taken how we have discharg'd the duties of mercy and charity which we owe to our poor brethren. To secure us against ever forgetting this duty, which indeed the humanity of our nature shou'd excite us to remember, he acquaints us that he shall esteem our performance or neglect of it as kindness shewn, or refus'd to himself: And *Finally*, he forewarns us of the different consequences, the *infinitely* and *eternally* different consequences, which will attend our observance, or omission of it.

And do we *really* believe his account of this matter? Are we seriously persuaded that all this shall come to pass as he hath foretold it? If we
do

S E R M. *do believe*, let us duly confider it; and furely it
 X. will warm the coldest heart, and enlarge the narrowest and moft contracted.

Represent to your imaginations that awfull scene which your eyes muft one day behold:
 Matt. XXV. Behold *the fon of man feated on the throne of his*
 31. *glory; See all nations gathered before him; The*
 Daniel VII. *judgment fet; the books open'd.* O what wou'd
 10. we not then give to have recorded in thefe books, fuch a lift of our good works, as might give us a reasonable hope, that our names wou'd be found
 Revel. XX. *written in the book of life!* What will then be the
 15. condition of the griping mifer, who lov'd his gold better than his God! Or the prodigal fpendthrift who preferr'd riot and debauchery, to the pleasures of doing good, and the happinefs of heaven! What tongue can describe their excefs of Agony! what heart can conceive their deſpair, and difmay, when the inexorable Judge now *Saviour* no more, pronounces the ſentence of eternal woe!

Go ye hard-hearted and unrelenting wretches;
 Ye who cou'd unpitying behold your fellow-creature's miſery; Ye who cou'd ungratefull deny

ny relief to your suppliant saviour ; Go to that S E R M.
 fociety for which ye are fit : Go *Ye cursed into* X.
everlasting fire prepar'd for the Devil and his Matt. XXV.
Angels. 41.

What on the other hand must be the rapture,
 the triumphant joy of those good and faithfull
 servants, whom the smiling Judge invites to hap-
 piness, which shall never know satiety, interrup-
 tion, or end ! *Come ye blessed of my Father ; Ye* 34
 whose hearts cou'd feel for another's woe ; whose
 hands ever ministred to the necessities of your
 brethren ; Ye, whose love to me induc'd you
 for my sake to love and pray for all mankind, and
 to do good to all to the extent of your ability ;
 Come ye, and *inherit the kingdom which was pre-*
par'd for souls like yours from the foundation of
the world.

What think you (my brethren) must be the dif-
 ference between the perceptions of these two
 ranks of people ? between the condition of those
 who stand on the right hand, and those on the
 left ? The difference (you say) is beyond compa-
 rison ; and too great to be express'd ; *Indeed it*
is : And I pray you to remember, that in one of

U

these

S E R M. these conditions, every one of us must shortly be.

X. And then if we have not humanity enough to love our brethren, nor gratitude enough to love our saviour, we shall surely have the wisdom to love ourselves.

And now what remains but that in few words I recommend to you the *particular* charity which this day gives you an opportunity to assist and encourage? *Few* indeed are sufficient to recommend a design calculated to answer such laudable purposes, as every *good Englishman* and *sincere Christian* cannot but approve and endeavour to promote. If we sincerely love our country, and wish it's strength and stability, it's wealth and grandeur; we can by no means so effectually contribute thereto, as by training up the rising generation in such principles of religion and virtue, such habits of sobriety, frugality, and industry, as may make them good subjects, usefull citizens, and worthy members of society; in whatever way of life providence shall place them. By this excellent institution of publick charity schools, the number and support of which does honor to the nation, multitudes of children are not only for the present

present provided with wholsome and comfortable S E R M.
food and raiment; but have the means put into X.
their hands of obtaining them for the remaining
part of their lives: And instead of turning thieves
and plunderers, the pest and scandal of the com-
munity in which they live, they become by the
prudent and usefull education here bestow'd on
them, fit to serve that community in various ca-
pacities; as their tempers shall incline, and their
talents enable them. These innocents who now
intreat your charitable assistance, promise you
to make the most advantageous use of it, by ac-
quiring such profitable knowlege, and beneficial
arts, as will qualify them to be of future service
to your safety, your business, and your pleasure:
They will one day return the bounty you now
bestow on them, by their skill in your manu-
factures; their diligence in your trade; their ex-
pertness and bravery in your marine. Every
encourager then of industry, every well-wisher
to trade, every lover of his country, will doubt-
less liberally contribute to the support of a cha-
rity, which so educates and forms our youth, as
to render them most extensively useful to the
publick.

S E R M. And every good Christian will afford us his
 X. assistance from a still superior motive. It hath
 been I hope sufficiently shewn, that we have not
 the least pretensions to that character, if we are
 capable of disregarding *his* indigent brethren
 whom we call *Saviour* and *Redeemer*; *Master*
 and *Lord*: And let it be remember'd that this
 benevolent Saviour hath upon all occasions ex-
 press'd a most remarkable tenderness towards the
 innocent and helpless state of infancy. When
 Mark X. 13. the people *brought young children to him, that he*
shou'd touch them, his disciples (thinking it no
 doubt beneath their master's dignity to be trou-
 bled with relieving their childish infirmities) *re-*
buked those that brought them: And when Jesus
saw it, he was much displeased, and said, suffer
little children to come unto me; and forbid them
not: — And he took them up in his arms, put
his hands upon them, and blessed them. Admira-
 ble condescension! Heavenly compassion! And
 shall not we endeavour to imitate this great pat-
 tern of goodness, by something more than *not for-*
bidding, by *assisting* young children to *come to Christ*
 their saviour? This we shall do in the best and
 most

most effectual manner, by supporting these schools S E R M.
of publick charity, where children are not more X.
regularly fed with *the meat that perisheth*, than John VI. 27.
with *that which endureth to everlasting life*: Where
they as regularly receive such religious instructi-
ons, and attend such offices of devotion, as will
dispose and prepare them for an happy immor-
tality; as they learn those lucrative arts by which
they are to maintain themselves during their mor-
tal life: By contributing therefore to the support
of such pious establishments, we copy our blef-
fed master's bright example in the most exact
manner possible; and at once feed the body, and
save the soul.

And if we *now* thus resemble him in goodness
and charity, we shall *hereafter* be made like him
in glory and happiness. The *general* promise in
the text, that he will look upon kindness shewn
to his brethren, as to himself, he in another place
particularly applies to the case of young children:
Whofo shall receive one such little child in my name, Matt. XVIII.
receiveth me. And now therefore shew, that you 5.
do *indeed* receive him as your *saviour*, your *ma-*
ster, and *Lord*: Shew the sincerity of the faith
you

S E R M. you profess by fuitable works : Take the present
X. opportunity, which may possibly be your last,
of doing good to these infant innocents for the
sake of your Redeemer : And remember that the
day is at hand, when he will tell you in the pre-
sence of God, Angels, and Men ; *Inasmuch as
ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren,
ye did it unto me.*

A SERMON

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd on Christmas-Day.

LUKE II. 14.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST; AND ON
EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN.

REJOICE *in the Lord alway, and again* I SERM. XI.
say Rejoice; Rejoice evermore; and in every
thing give thanks: Thus the great Apostle of the
gentiles exhorts and admonishes his Christian con-
verts and brethren. And if it is a reasonable
and a Christian part, *alway* to rejoice, and *in*
every thing to give thanks; for the ordinary oc-
currences, the common enjoyments, and even
the afflictions of *this* life; with what degrees of
joyfull gratitude ought we to receive and to
remember *mercies which endure for ever*; and
blessings which extend to a life *eternal*? *Such*
mercies, such blessings we are here assembled to
comme-

S E R M. commemorate ; Even that manifestation of God
 XI. in the flesh, and the salvation of mankind effected thereby, which did as at this time receive it's
 Luke II. 11. completion and accomplishment : When *unto us was born in the city of David, a Saviour, who was Christ the Lord.* I can think of no subject more suitable, or more proper for our meditations on this solemn occasion, than the words which I have now read unto you ; being the hymn sung by the Angelick choir, when they proclaim'd to the shepherds of Bethlehem the glad tidings of a new born Redeemer. Which heavenly hymn constantly made a part of divine worship in the purest ages of the primitive church ; and hath with equal piety and propriety been retain'd by our own, in the most sacred of her holy offices : When she directs her members immediately after the participation of the holy communion, to lift up their hearts and voices with the warmest devotion, in singing *Glory be to God on high ; on earth peace, good will towards men.*

The meaning of which words is too obvious to stand in need of any explication. The Angels
 give

give glory to the Almighty for the amazing display of the divine attributes which appear'd in the incarnation of his son Christ Jesus; And they declare that by it peace and good will was restor'd both between God and man; and between men one with another: That the partition wall between Jew and Gentile was broken down; and that men of every nation, and every tongue *shou'd confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; and being justified by him shou'd have peace with God.* And to shew you that with reason did those blessed spirits celebrate and give glory to God for this great and wonderfull event; and that though *marvellous in all his works* both of creation and providence, he yet gave still higher evidences of infinite wisdom, almighty power, and inexpressible love and goodness, in the mysterious method of man's redemption; This (I say) shall be the business of the following discourse.

S E R M.
XI.

Phil. II. 11.

Romans V. 1.

Wisdom no less than infinite was indeed necessary to contrive a method of effecting what to all limited understanding appear'd impracticable;

X

I.

SER M. cable ; And so surely did the restoration of the
 XI. human nature to its pristine purity and happiness appear, from the wretched state into which it was sunk by the sin of our first progenitor.

Ecclef. VII. *God made him upright ; free, able, and forewarn'd to stand ; free also if so he perversely determin'd to fall. Soon tempted, he soon and foully fell. That evil spirit who by his pride, envy, and rebellion against God, had hurl'd himself down from an heavenly throne to the abyfs of hell, hoping to frustrate his Creator's benevolent intention in the creation of man, and to draw him into a participation of his own guilt and apostacy ;*

2 Cor. XI. 3. *this evil spirit Satan in the serpent's form begui-*

Genef. III. 6. *led Eve through his subtlety. She took of the forbidden fruit, and did eat ; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat ; and both were ruin'd, and all was lost. For God had pronounc'd*

Ibid. II. 17. *their doom ; that in the day they shou'd so transgress they shou'd surely die. What help, what remedy remain'd ; The veracity, the justice of the Almighty, and the honor of his law, requir'd that the sentence shou'd be executed ; unless some method cou'd be found out of shewing mercy, which might be*
 confis-

consistent with that regard which must inviolably be paid to these considerations. But what satisfaction can be propos'd? Or by whom shall it be made? Shall our first parents hope by repentance and submission to soften and deprecate divine vengeance? Ah! what kind of repentance, what sincere submission can be expected from a nature now corrupted by the Devil, and forsaken of God? Or suppose their contrition to be both real and deep; Yet Justice sternly demands to be satisfied; God's word had gone forth; and shall he become a liar, because man was become a rebel? Where then can this forlorn unhappy pair look out for succour? The world as yet had no other inhabitants than themselves; and the countless millions by which it shou'd be peopled in after ages, tainted by their crime, and involv'd in their misery, little able to expiate their offence must themselves groan under it's consequences. Or will some pitying angel interpose his friendly aid, and die *himself* to save *man's* forfeit life? *Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?* In those heavenly breasts it dwells indeed in a high degree; but they cannot love the ob-

S E R M.
XI.

S E R M. jects of God's displeasure : Or which among them
 XI. shall be able, or shall boldly dare to suffer all that divine justice arm'd with Almighty power may inflict upon wilfull disobedience ? Here then all hopes were over for the race of Adam : All was horror, despair, and dismay. But here the brightness of infinite wisdom breaks forth, and puts to flight the dreary gloom ; dispels the clouds, clears the prospect, and points out a method by which God and man may be reconcil'd : God's veracity stand unimpeach'd, and his justice be satisfied ; yet his mercy be extended to the offenders.

This benevolent design God immediately intimated, though in dark and ambiguous terms ; when in cursing the serpent he declar'd, that *the*
 Gen. III. 15. *seed of the woman shou'd bruise his head.* That is ; that Jesus Christ born of a woman shou'd overthrow the dominion, and destroy the works of the devil ; and finally extirpate Satan with his dire off-spring, sin and death. This promise was renew'd still in general words to Abraham ; that
 Ibid. XII. 3. *in him shou'd all the families of the earth be blessed :* The Messiah who came to save and to bless
 us,

us, being *according to the flesh*, descended from his S E R M.
 loins. The same mercifull purpose was by degrees XL.
 revel'd to David, and to all the prophets ; and as
 the period of it's accomplishment drew nearer, in
 planer terms, and with more particular circum-
 stances ; Till at length, *in the fullness of time* ;
 at the precise æra when that infinite wisdom which
 had plann'd, saw most meet to complete the gra-
 cious scheme, *God sent forth his son ; made of a*
woman, made under the law ; To redeem them that
were under the Law, and them also who were with-
out law : Even as many as wou'd accept this re-
 demption on the easy conditions on which it was
 offerr'd ; *Repentance toward God, and faith to-* Acts XX. 21.
ward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here then appears
 the depth of infinite wisdom ; Here *righteousness*
and peace are met together ; mercy and truth here
kiss each other. Our saviour being a partaker of the
 human nature was a *fit* substitute for, and repre-
 sentative of it ; Offering himself a *voluntary* sa-
 crifice to expiate the sins of men, no injustice
 cou'd be committed in accepting him as such ;
 Born without stain of sin, he was also a *pure and*
spotless sacrifice ; And by the union of his divine
 nature

S E R M. nature to his human, that sacrifice became of *in-*
 XI. *finite and inestimable value.* God cou'd at once
 satisfy, but cou'd not suffer; Man might for ever
 suffer, but cou'd never satisfy: But Christ Jesus be-
 ing both God and man was fully capable of doing
 all that was requisite to appease offended justice;
 to vindicate the honor of the divine majesty; and
 at the same time to procure mercy for every offen-
 der; who was willing to embrace it on the rea-
 sonable terms of faith in him, and a life of virtue.

This wondrous method of man's redemption,
 though before it was made known to us, it cou'd
 never have been conceiv'd by human intellect,
 yet when revel'd is perfectly agreeable to reason;
 and shews the consummate wisdom of the con-
 triver in the highest manner in which it ever ap-
 pear'd to the sons of men. Well might the holy
 angels in beholding the completion of this marvel-
 lous scheme break forth into singing, *Glory be to*
God for this highest manifestation of his wisdom:
 And well may we in reviewing and commemo-
 rating it, cry out in the words of St. Paul; *O*
 Romans XL. *the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and know-*
 33. *lege of God!*

Nor

Nor did the greatness of Almighty power appear less glorious in effecting, than the depth of infinite wisdom in contriving the salvation of mankind, by the incarnation of our blessed saviour. But the time wou'd fail me, and I shou'd widely exceed the due limits of this discourse, was I to mention but a few of the marks of omnipotence, display'd in the execution of this amazing plan: Suffice it to say, that in, and by it are united qualities so contrary, and properties so opposite, as cou'd never have been joyn'd, and by their junction have form'd a scheme of absolute perfection, by any but an Almighty hand.

To connect active intelligence with sluggish matter, pure and vivid spirit with gross and heavy body, presiding conscience and rebellious appetite; in a word from a composition of a reasonable soul and human flesh to make one man, was indeed a work for a divine architect alone: But how much greater the operation, and more stupendous the atchievement by the union of God and man to form one Christ! For what was this but to unite human weakness to Almighty power?

S E R M.
XI.
II.

S E R M. power? Human ignorance to divine wisdom?

XI.

Distress, disease, decay, and death, to peace, health, life, and immortality? Yet these were united when the son of God, who was himself truly God left his throne of glory for a tabernacle of clay; and taking our nature upon him became like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. This union was the highest exercise of omnipotent power that ever was, or cou'd be manifested; This the Angels celebrate by ascribing Glory to God in the highest; And this surely calls for the deepest admiration and devoutest gratitude from us, whom this miraculous work was perform'd to save.

III. But warm as our hearts, and loud as our praises shou'd be for the wisdom and power of God shewn in the incarnation and birth of Christ; yet will the heart glow with redoubled ardor, and the voice rise to still loftier strains, while we contemplate the height of goodness, and wonders of love extended in it to mankind. A benevolence truly Godlike doth indeed appear in the various exertions of creating bounty, and prefer-

preserving providence ; But these are beyond S E R-M.
 comparifon furpass'd by the boundless mercies of XI.
 redeeming love. For let us confider for whom
 it was, that the fon of God became man, and
 liv'd, and died. It is observ'd by himself in his
 last difcourfes to his difciples, that *greater love* John XV. 13.
hath no man than this, that a man lay down his
life for his friends : And few have probably been
 the instances in which fuch a degree of friend-
 fhip either has, or ought to have been exerted.
 But herein *God commendeth his love towards us,* Romans V. 8.
in that while we were yet finners, Chrift died for
us. Not the fond parent for his darling child ;
 Not the kind husband for his faithfull spouse ;
 Not the fymphathizing Friend for his fellow-
 heart, *the Friend who is as his own foul ;* Not in- Deut. XIII.
 fluent'd by these relations, nor induc'd by these 6.
 motives, came our blessed faviour by dying for
 us, to redeem and deliver us. It was deprav'd
 and corrupted man ; rebellious and apostate
 man ; Man deaf to his duty, and blind to his in-
 tereft, extremely wicked, and extremely misera-
 ble, that Chrift Jefus came into the world to fave.
 And this is furely a pitch of goodnefs unequall'd,

Y

and

S E R M. and almost incomprehensible. If the brave Hero
XI. who bleeds for his country's cause excites our admiration, and calls forth our praise, what love, what gratitude shou'd fill our hearts towards him who died for *his enemies*? If the *Angels who having kept their first estate*, and never fallen, had no need of a Redeemer; and had therefore no interest of their own in, and receiv'd no benefit to themselves from our Lord's incarnation: If they were so transported at this highest display of divine goodness, and the peace and good-will restor'd to mankind, as to *sing together, and shout for joy*; With what raptures of love, what zeal of devotion shall Man himself be inflam'd by it, who by it, and it alone is rescued from ruin, and restor'd to happiness? Certainly, this wonderfull exertion of divine goodness demands the warmest affections, and most exalted gratitude to which our nature is capable of rising. And if through the weakness of that mortal nature we cannot soar to angelick fervors; if our love and devotion cannot be always equally warm and glowing, yet let it be always steady and sincere. Let us while we offer to God the *fruit of our lips*, add there-
to

to that obedience of our hearts and lives, which S E R M.
 can alone render our thanks acceptable to him, XI.
 or beneficial to ourselves. While we remember
 our Redeemer's birth, let us be carefull to forsake
 and avoid all *those works of the Devil, to destroy* 1 John III. 8.
which he was manifested: and assiduous and zeal- Tit. II. 14.
ous in all those good works, to which he hath puri-
fied us unto himself a peculiar people. Let us keep
the solemn and holy feast not with the leaven of
malice and wickedness, so odious to the prince of
 peace, the God of love; not with rioting and
 drunkenness, *always* unbecoming Christians, and
particularly unseasonable at the very time when
 we celebrate the birth of a pure and holy Jesus;
but with sincerity, soberness, and truth. And
 may we now and always with such piety and
 devotion commemorate our blessed saviour's first
 coming in the flesh, *that at his second coming to* Collects for
judge the world we may be found an acceptable 1st and 4th
people in his sight; and may rise to the life immor- Sundays in
tal through him who liveth and reigneth with the Advent.
Father and the Holy Spirit, one God world with-
out end. Amen.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Episcopal chapel
At DUNKELD;

On Thursday May 5th, 1763.

Being the day appointed

By his Majesty's royal proclamation,
To be observ'd as a day of publick thanksgiving

T O

ALMIGHTY GOD;

For the P E A C E:

ISAIAH XLV. 6, 7.

I AM THE LORD, THERE IS NONE ELSE. I FORM
THE LIGHT, AND CREATE DARKNESS; I MAKE
PEACE AND CREATE EVIL; I THE LORD DO
ALL THESE THINGS.

SERM.
XII.

THE doctrine of a divine providence direct-
ing and superintending all human affairs,
is here deliver'd with that sublimity of sentiment,
and

and grandeur of style, which are so conspicuous S E R M.
throughout all the writings dictated by the holy XII.
spirit to the Evangelical prophet. And this doctrine is perfectly agreeable to right reason and true philosophy; confirm'd by observation and experience; and full of comfort and solid satisfaction to the upright and virtuous. Minute philosophers, and half thinkers may in the poverty of their understanding suppose, that he who made the world has no share in the government of it; Inattentive and superficial observers only who look no further than the object just before their eyes, can fail to perceive an unseen hand, working the springs, and directing the movements of all human actions; And the wicked and they surely alone, can choose to believe themselves subject to the influence of blind chance, or a fatal necessity, rather than under the guidance of a wise and good governor; conscious that their conduct is not such as will recommend them to the patron of good men, the friend of virtue. How much wiser! how much better! and how much happier they! who acknowledging and trusting in the providential care of an all wise
and

S E R M. and benevolent Being ; endeavour to secure his
XII. favor and protection, by an observance of his commands, and an imitation of his example ! With a mind fraught with this true wisdom, with an heart warm with these pious affections, *our most religious and gracious King* hath call'd upon us by his royal authority, to offer up our devoutest praises to the *Author of peace, and lover of concord*, for the present happy return of it. And it is I trust with the same sentiments, and similar dispositions, that we are here assembled to obey the commands of our earthly Sovereign ; by rendering the tribute of our thanks to the Supreme Monarch, and Lord of the Universe.

I know not how better or more effectually to fall in with and improve this religious and becoming train of thought, than by recollecting the miseries of the war under which the world hath lately groan'd ; and thence judging of the expedience and happiness of the period now put to it's rage. But to paint in just and vivid colors the devastations and calamities of the late wide-spreading and general hostilities, to place these sad pictures of horror and distress in a just and striking

striking light, is a task for which I know myself S E R M.
XII.
unqualified in every respect, and on all accounts.

That God be thanked who hath preserv'd our native country from hostile attacks, and long meditated mischief, we of these kingdoms know by report only, and have but in imagination felt the destruction which hath been in almost all the earth around us. But we have heard with tingling ears, and those brave men who have hazarded their lives, and spilt their blood in their country's cause, have told us the dreadful tale of unequall'd carnage, and death's triumphant and extended reign. Far and wide flew discord, destructive Fiend! and scatter'd her poison, and shed her plagues through every quarter of the globe. Turn we our eyes to a not far distant state; and there we may view (if we can bear the prospect) one of the fairest and finest countries in Europe desolated and destroy'd by every species of misery and ruin. *Here* the dogs of war were let loose with unchain'd fury; Sharp and deep hath been their bite; and deadly the wounds they gave. For the elegant arts and ornaments of peace, lo the engines of destruction
and

S E R M. and the implements of death ! Here indeed was
XII. *burning instead of beauty* : The stately cities and
goodly palaces became a prey to the devouring
flames. No reflection I trust can be thought to
be here levell'd against any particular powers en-
gaged in the late general war : Such strictures
belong not to my profession, nor become the
house of God on any occasion ; least of all, on that
of this day's peacefull solemnity. The cruel ne-
cessity of war, rather than the inclination of any
of the princes involv'd in it, occasion'd we may
reasonably presume the severities here deplor'd :
And the guilt of them therefore (except in the case
of unnecessary cruelty and unprofitable mischief)
will lye on those whose unjust ambition, ill foun-
ded claims, or breach of faith and treaties began
it. But on what side soever that blame shou'd
lye, hard must be the heart which melts not with
compassion for those who have so deeply suffer'd
by it ; and thankless the soul which is not warm'd
with gratitude to the God of Hosts, for protect-
ing us from those calamities which our fellow-
creatures, fellow-Christians, and fellow-protest-
ants have endur'd. From these sorrows not our
merit

merit but his mercy deliver'd us ; and therefore S E R M.
not unto us, not unto our wisdom or strength XII.
but unto his name be all the praise !

But though our stripes have been few and light in comparison of those with which others have been smitten, yet have they been many and weighty enough to make us sensible of the chastising rod. The best blood of the nation hath been pour'd out in copious streams : What remote region, what far distant soil hath not been saturated with it ?

Witness ye before thought inaccessible heights, where the valiant soldier, and able general, the accomplish'd Hero and amiable man triumph'd amidst the last agonies when he found his brave followers victorious ! and joyfully resign'd his life as a free and welcome sacrifice to the service of his country and his King ! And witness thou O Fatal grave of Britons ! which hast open'd wide thy devouring Jaws, and inclos'd within them thousands and ten thousands of our countrymen !

And hath not our expence of treasure kept equal pace with that of blood ? A charge une-

Z

quall'd,

S E R M. quall'd, and unheard of in former wars hath been
XII. incurr'd: So far as it was necessary, and directed to answer in the most effectual manner the ends for which it was allow'd, it was a reasonable and commendable charge; and a far more judicious oeconomy than an ill-tim'd frugality. But heavy however is the load which it hath laid on us; and what a long continuance, and the happiest improvement of peace can alone prevent from being severely felt by generations yet unborn. At the same time that we were burden'd with an expence so extra-ordinary, the ordinary means of sustaining it were diminish'd. There is scarce a truer maxim in politicks, than that the wealth of a nation in a great degree depends on it's populoufness; and the number of it's laborers and artificers: But of these the country was drain'd to recruit our exhausted armies; while our villages were further thinn'd by the even partial success of a measure, which yet must be own'd to be the most natural method of defending our native country from foreign invasion.

The

The time permits me but barely to mention S E R M.
a few of the evils attending the late bloody and XII.
expensive war ; But the bare mention of them is
indeed sufficient to make us fully sensible how
heavy and grievous they have already been ; And
how destructive their continuance must have
prov'd : And of course I hope to make us truly
thankfull for the happy conclusion now put to
them. If we believe God's word, we must be-
lieve that he *who created the darkness, created*
also (for reasons known to his own infinite wis-
dom) the evils of *the war* : And that *he who*
form'd primeval light, hath *made wars to cease*,
and peace to bloom. The ambition of one
prince or state ; the just and manly resolution of
another ; the wisdom and vigilance of an able
and upright minister ; the conduct of a great
commander ; or the ardent courage of the valiant
soldier ; Fleets and armies ; Winds and waves ;
——These are all inferior agents employ'd by
providence to effect it's wise and gracious ends ;
and act in an instrumental and subordinate man-
ner as they are directed by the Supreme disposer
of events. As therefore while it seem'd good to

S E R M. him to keep us under the scourge of war, we went
XII. up year by year to the house of the Lord, to humble ourselves with Fasting and prayers; to deplore our sins, and deprecate his displeasure; with what foul ingratitude, what leprosy of mind must we be tainted, if we return not now thither with loud voices and thankfull hearts to praise and glorify our God! Be such unfeeling negligence far from us! But our attendance at this time and place shews that we are not capable of it. In *thus assembling ourselves together*, we behave as good subjects, good Christians, and reasonable men. *It becometh well all such to be thankfull* to God for all his mercies; and surely not least so for what is one of the greatest: And such is a safe and salutary peace. Of the terms of peace; Of the advantages or disadvantages of particular articles; of what shou'd be strenuously insisted on, and what may safely be yielded up; Of these and all the various and complicated questions which require to be adjusted at the conclusion of an extensive war, few, very few indeed! are in any degree competent judges; though so many pretend to determine, and with
so

so peremptory a sentence concerning them. S E R M.
When therefore we are enjoyn'd by lawfull au- XII.
thority to observe a solemnity of this kind, our
obedience to that injunction in returning thanks
for what we know is *in general* one of God's
best blessings, is not the unmeaning *sacrifice of*
fools, but both *a reasonable and laudable service*;
though we pretend not either to understand or
examine the utility of *any particular* pacifica-
tion. This is the state of the case, and the duty
of the subject on *all such occasions*: But in the
present instance, we may safely go farther. Still
keeping clear of political disputes which are out
of our province, and wou'd lead us into a
Labyrinth where we might soon lose ourselves;
we may from fair probabilities and strong pre-
sumptions alone conclude, that the peace for
which we now give thanks, is upon the whole
safe and beneficial: That *it is the Lord's doing*; Psalms
That this day is therefore justly appointed for CXVIII. 23,
our thanksgivings and praises for it; and that 24.
we ought to rejoice and be glad in it.

We see upon the throne a prince who without
one blemish or stain in his private character, is
endued

S E R M. endued with *at least* as many publick virtues and
 XII. regal accomplishments as ever bloom'd so fresh and fair in so early a spring. Native BRITON as he is, and glories in the name, his virtues and excellent qualities are all our own; And we may assuredly expect to feel all their benign and gracious influences. His glory call'd out to him aloud not to fully the triumphs of a most successful though bloody and expensive war, by any but an honorable peace; His interest (for *his* interest is *that of his people*) admonish'd him to accept only a safe and advantageous peace: And can we doubt whether his inclination led him to follow these united counsels of his interest and his glory? If we can, it is to be fear'd we form a judgment of our King, from a consciousness of very evil principles and dispositions in ourselves; For it is a judgment directly opposite to all that experience hath taught us of H I M.

And to this presumption in favor of the present peace arising from the approbation of *such* a Sovereign, must be added the testimony born to it's honor and utility by the suffrages of the great
 Council

Council of the nation ; the Nobles, and the Representatives of all the commons of the realm : who after a full discussion of every question, an examination of every article, and a fair field for every argument, have by a majority next to unanimity determin'd the conditions of peace to be *safe ; honorable ; and advantageous*. And when we consider the birth and education of those of whom that august assembly is compos'd ; the means and opportunities which they must have of *knowing and understanding* the true interest of their country in all respects ; and the certainty that even from private and selfish motives, from regard to the vast property which as individuals they possess in that country, as well as from higher and worthier considerations, they must *desire and intend* it's advantage and aggrandisement ; When (I say) we allow these reflections their due weight, we have the *fairest* probability, and the *strongest* presumption, that their resolution is agreeable to truth and fact. Our opinion of our Superiors must be totally void of candor, and that which we entertain of ourselves as void of modesty, if we do not believe them to be

Re- S E R M.
XII.

S E R M. be *equally upright*, and *more capable* judges than
 XII. ourselves, of what *are*, and what *are not* proper
 terms of peace.

Let us then as it appears we have so much reason, heartily and devoutly bless the Almighty Ruler of all things, for that which he hath now given us; For stopping the destroying Angel's hand before we had felt his severer strokes: For
 Isaiah II. 4. beating *our swords into plow-shares, and our spears into pruning hooks*. And let us beseech him to give to the peace that duration and stability which alone can secure to us it's beneficial effects. Above all, let us beg of him who maketh men to *be of one mind*, that he wou'd pour on all ranks and conditions among us his blessed spirit of Unity and concord: That *all bitterness, wrath, and clamor*, all evil surmises, ill-founded jealousies, and causeless suspicions, may *be put away far from us*: And that we may all with sincerity and singleness of heart, endeavour in our different stations and capacities to promote the glory of God; and the publick tranquillity and welfare.

Finally;

Finally ; Let us beseech him *by whom Kings* SER.M.
reign, to crown our gracious and excellent Mo- XII.
narch with all his best and choicest blessings :
That divine wisdom may be his guide, and di-
vine power his strength : That neither our pri-
vate interests, nor our turbulent passions (from one
or both of which it is much to be fear'd, arise
groundless objections, and undutyfull clamors)
may disappoint his cares for the general good :
But that he may always *possess*, as there is the
greatest reason to believe he will always *deserve*
the hearts of his people. Even so, O Blessed
God! King of Kings! and Lord of Lords! *Grant*
our King a long life, and make him glad with the
joy of thy countenance : In his time let the righteous
flourish, yea and abundance of peace : As for his
enemies, (if he can have any enemies yet remain-
ing) clothe them with shame ; But upon himself,
and his posterity let his crown flourish, till all hu-
man empire shall be more !

15 NO 67 .

